

At the core of his life was a mystery—

When the javelinas were out of sight, Bill rose and ran over a ridge, then followed a game trail to the bottom of the canyon. As he ran, he thought about the best way to move the wild pigs up the canyon floor so his friends could get a clear shot at them.

Suddenly a tremendous explosion shook the earth. Dust rose into the air as rocks the size of mop buckets tumbled down the canyon slopes. For an instant, Bill thought someone had shot him. Looking toward the western sky, he saw a white pyramid approaching him faster than a supersonic jet. Then he realized it was a constellation of angels. They were powerful beings clothed in white armor, with their wings swept back and their arms stretched forward. Bill sucked in his breath, and before he could exhale, these angels surrounded him and somehow (not with their hands) they lifted him into the air.

—a mystery whose time had come. . .

Supernatural: The Life of William Branham

**Book Six
(1960–1965)**

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By Owen Jorgensen

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—Owen Jorgensen, 2010

Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

—2 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV)

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Preface

Here are the final 14 chapters in my biography of William Branham. Some people have written books that have 96 pages. I wrote a book with 96 chapters. When I started this project in 1987, I didn't plan on writing such a long biography. My original idea was to make it around 400 pages. But when I plunged into the research phase, I found so much fascinating material, it was difficult to decide what to put in and what to leave out; so I decided to write at length and then trim it down when I finished.

By 1993 I had written 500 pages, which covered William Branham's life from 1909 through 1950. Since he died in December of 1965, I knew I had a long ways to go. However, wanting some feedback on my work, I mailed a copy of what I had written to Pearry Green, Pastor of Tucson Tabernacle in Tucson, Arizona. Because Pearry Green had been a close friend of William Branham, I figured he would give me an honest review.

When the manuscript arrived at Tucson Tabernacle, Pastor Green was not there, so his secretary left it on his desk. Later that day he stopped by his office to check his mail, saw the manuscript, and read the first page. He told me he stayed at his desk and read through the night until he finished all 500 pages. A few days later he called me to give me his opinion, and eventually he became my first publisher. It was Pearry Green's idea to publish this biography in parts as each part was completed. That was a good idea because it would take me another 17 years to finish the whole project.

Supernatural: The Life of William Branham, Book Six took me far longer to write than the previous five books in this series. Books One, Two, Three, Four and Five are mostly composed of stories—this happened, then that happened,

etc. With stories, I simply gathered all the facts I could find, selected which ones to use, arranged them in the order they happened, and then wrote them out as clearly as I could. Sometimes I needed to do some detective work, but it was minimal. Book Six is different. Yes, it is filled with stories about his life—amazing stories. But there is more. I called Book Six "*The Prophet and His Revelation*" because from 1960 to 1965 the dramatic events of his life can't be understood apart from his teachings. Still, I kept in mind I was writing a biography and not a doctrinal dissertation. I wanted to concentrate on the story and not get sidetracked with doctrinal explanations. To accomplish this objective I chose to summarize key sermons that he preached.

Summarizing these selected sermons turned out to be a time-consuming task. First I had to study all his sermons in this time-frame, and then decide which ones should be included in this biography. Then I read through these selected sermons again, found their central themes and summarized their main points. Often I included some edited quotations from the text, so the reader can see how he presented this material. (At the back of this book I list the sources for these quotations so those people who want to read them verbatim can find them.) This method, for the most part, keeps the storyline moving steadily forward. However, William Branham preached two doctrinal series that were so central to his message that I dealt with them in more detail. In December of 1960 he taught a series on the seven church ages, and in March of 1963 he preached on the seven seals, both subjects found in the book of Revelation. My summaries of these two series are as brief as I could write them and still have them make sense.

Today, as I understand it, there are millions of people who believe William Branham delivered a message from God to the world. Certainly, this book is not a perfect representation of that message because it is impossible to write a summary that perfectly represents the whole. That is why there is a whole. But a good summary can refresh a dim memory, as well as stimulate new interest. It is also an excellent way to get an overview of a broad subject. I have tried my best to write an accurate, balanced summary. I hope this book will encourage you to look further into William Branham's message.

Across 23 years I have spent around 12,000 hours working on *Supernatural: The Life of William Branham*. I have written over 440,000 words in my effort to put his life into perspective, and I still feel like I haven't done justice to his story. In fact, I have only scratched the surface of his extraordinary experiences and his message. Perhaps this is how John felt when he finished writing a biography about his friend, Jesus of Nazareth; he ended his biography with these words:

And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen. (John 21:25 NKJV)

Perhaps the poet was thinking of this Bible verse when he penned:

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the sky of parchment made;
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Tho' stretched from sky to sky.

I am like one of the scribes in that poem, a scribe with a word-processor who has spent over two decades writing about the love of God as expressed in this one man's life. William Branham was an example of how a Christian should live. What first attracted me to his sermons was that he elevated Jesus Christ higher than anyone else I had ever heard. I still feel that way. William Branham showed me that Jesus Christ is right here, right now—and that Jesus cares passionately about you and me. What greater legacy could anyone leave?

—Owen Jorgensen, 2010

Foreword

WILLIAM BRANHAM is not the first man in history to say that he talked with an angel; but few men, if any, have shown more proof that such a claim is true. Between 1946 and 1954, he demonstrated the supernatural gospel of Jesus Christ to millions of people—not through radio or television, but directly, through large evangelistic campaigns in America, Europe, Africa, and India. The people who attended his faith-healing campaigns marveled at his gift of discernment, and the prophecies and miracles that followed. During these eight years he led over 500,000 people to faith in Christ. Over a million people received physical healings through his prayers. Beyond this, his ministry inspired hundreds of men and women to start faith-healing ministries of their own.

Paradoxically, as 1954 came to an end William Branham felt dissatisfied. He thought his supernatural gift should have revolutionized the Christian world, broken down denominational barriers, and brought all Christians together in oneness of spirit, purpose, and doctrine. It had not. Why? Perhaps it was because too many Christians didn't understand Bible prophecy, especially as it pertained to their own lives. Worse yet, many Christians didn't even understand the basics of their faith—like who Jesus Christ is, what He promised, and how He expects His people to live. To remedy this problem, Bill began teaching more doctrine in his evangelistic campaigns. This decision produced some unexpected results. During 1955, attendance at his faith-healing campaigns declined sharply. Evidently, people welcomed miracles as long as they didn't have to change their own ideas. Some people felt he should concentrate on divine healing and let people with more education teach doctrine. By the

end of 1955, attendance at one California campaign had dropped so low that William Branham seriously considered quitting evangelism. God changed his mind by showing him a vision that explained his past ministry, and suggested that his future ministry would be even greater.

In this vision Bill was fishing from the shore of a lake. The angel told him how to catch the bigger fish. After casting his line, Bill was supposed to pull gently, which would attract the little fish to his lure. Then he was supposed to pull a little harder and scare the small fish away. That would attract the attention of the bigger fish. His third pull was supposed to be quick and strong to set the hook firmly in the jaw of a big trophy fish.

This vision was an allegory of his ministry. The angel explained that the first pull began in 1946 when Bill discerned sickness by touching a person's hand and detecting the vibrations of any germ-caused disease. The second pull started in 1949 when he began to discern sickness and other problems by seeing them enacted in a vision. The third pull of his ministry was approaching.

Then the scene changed. Now Bill was standing in the air, looking down on a crowd assembled inside a huge tent or cathedral. It looked like one of his faith-healing campaigns, only much larger. A little wooden building stood on the platform to the right of the pulpit. The Pillar of Fire descended into that small building and the angel of the Lord said, *"I'll meet you in there. This is the third pull. Unlike the first two pulls of your ministry, the third pull won't be a public show."*

During January of 1958, William Branham conducted a faith-healing campaign in Waterloo, Iowa. At a breakfast for ministers, he spoke about the day in 1933 when a supernatural light appeared above him and a voice said, *"As John the Baptist was sent to forerun the first coming of Jesus Christ, so are you sent with a message to forerun His second coming."* Then he told the ministers about the night in 1946 when an angel appeared to him and told him that God had ordained him to take a gift of healing to the peoples of the world. Quoting the apostle Paul, Bill declared, "I have not been disobedient to the heavenly vision."²⁹⁴ While

²⁹⁴ Acts 26:13-19

he was still speaking, ten ministers pushed their chairs away from their tables, grabbed their coats, and walked out into a cold winter day. This incident reflected what was happening in many of his evangelistic campaigns across the country, namely, interest was declining.

As he traveled home from Waterloo, he saw a vision of a surveyor's stake pounded into the ground in front of his house in Jeffersonville, Indiana. In this vision he saw a young man driving a bulldozer recklessly through his yard. Bill motioned him aside and asked him why he was making such a mess of the yard. The young man sassed him, and tried to slap him. Bill dodged the blow, and punched him in the stomach. At that moment the angel of the Lord appeared and said, "*Bypass this. When you see that stake driven down in your front yard by your gate, then go west.*" Suddenly Bill saw his family sitting in a covered wagon that was hitched to a team of horses. When he climbed onto the driver's seat and took the reins, the covered wagon changed into his family car—a modern Ford station wagon.

Five years later a surveyor hammered that stake into the ground by Bill's front gate, preparatory to the city widening Ewing Street. From that moment on, everything changed.

Chapter 82

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

1960 - 1961

ON SUNDAY MORNING, May 8, 1960, William Branham saw a vision (if such it could be called) where he stepped through the thin fabric that separates this world from the next.²⁹⁵ In this vision he saw a paradise where hundreds of thousands of young people surrounded him, all of them shouting “Our precious brother!” Bill was astonished to learn that these people were his converts who had died in Christ and were waiting for the time when Jesus would take them back to earth—howbeit, an improved earth where peace and goodness reign. Bill didn’t want to leave this paradise

²⁹⁵ Referring to the vision “Beyond the Curtain of Time in Chapter 81” At the time, Wm. Branham was uncertain whether it was a vision; or whether he had actually been there. He had seen hundreds of thousands of visions during his life, and he said this was different from any other vision he had ever seen.

and return to his old home; but God still had a work for him to finish on earth, so he had to go back.

Two weeks after this experience, he spoke to his church about the contrast between these two worlds. He said, “That place is so much better. Honestly (I say this by eyewitness), that just after this life is over we enter a land that is beyond anything anyone can imagine. If there are any strangers here, I pray to God that you don’t consider me a fanatic. I want to be honest and tell you the truth. What good would it do me to tell something that isn’t true? Paul was caught up into the third heaven and he saw things that it wasn’t expedient for him to mention.²⁹⁶ But he did say this much: *‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’*²⁹⁷

“Compared to that paradise, we’re living in a dump, a rubbish heap full of smoldering filth. Even if we are not contaminated with it ourselves, we are living in it, smelling the smoke coming from the smoldering embers of sin. When I was a young man and worked

²⁹⁶ 2 Corinthians 12:2-4

²⁹⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:9 (NKJV)

for the electric company, I sometimes had to read meters down by the city dump. I dreaded that route because the smell was horrible, especially when the dump was burning. Compared to the paradise I saw, this life on earth smells just as bad as an old city dump. Sin just smells from everywhere, spiritually speaking. But over there in that other dimension the wind is blowing fresh, and everything is love, and peace, and joy, and eternal life, just across the river.

“But now we’re in a battle. Let’s not lie down and say, ‘I’m in a hurry to get over there.’ Let’s bring every one with us that we can bring.”

Inspired by his experience beyond death, Bill preached four consecutive sermons dealing with a Christian’s inheritance: “Ephesians Parallels Joshua,” “Manifested Sons of God,” “Position in Christ,” and “Adoption, or Placing of Sons.” His emphasis was not on the future. He emphasized the resources God has given His children in this world to prepare them for their future home. He also stressed the safety and assurance the believer has in Christ. He delivered all four of these messages in May of 1960 at Branham

Tabernacle in Jeffersonville, the only place where he felt at liberty to teach on the deeper points of Christian doctrine. He said, “I want you people listening to these tapes to remember, this is to my church. When I’m out preaching evangelistic sermons amongst all kinds of people, I try to be a gentleman and I baby them along in their skimmed-milk ideas. But when it comes to really laying down the truth, here I’ll lay it down.”

In July of 1960 he began a series of faith-healing campaigns in the Pacific Northwest region. He spent eight nights preaching in Klamath Falls, Oregon; four nights in Lakeport, California; then he drove 400 miles north to hold an eight-day campaign in Yakima, Washington. Since God had now given him more strength to hold up under his special gift, he was discerning more people in the prayer-line each night. Consequently, he was pushing himself harder than he had for years. Each night he sank a little deeper into a pit of weariness. Sometimes he couldn’t even remember in what town he was ministering. By the end of this strenuous tour of the northwestern states,

he had sunk so deeply into exhaustion that he wondered if he could ever crawl out.

Gene Goad and Leo Mercier, who had come with him to tape-record his meetings, took turns driving on the way home so that Bill could sleep. But he had trouble sleeping. Somewhere in eastern Washington State, he asked Leo to pull over and stop. Getting out of the car, Bill walked away from the highway a little ways, knelt under a tree and prayed, “Lord, if You’ll just let me shake back to myself, good and strong again, I promise I’ll re-examine my ministry. Help me to know what the truth is so I can get my commission straight with the people.”

As usual, when he returned to Jeffersonville, he couldn’t rest at home because of all the people who wanted him to pray for them. So, the next day Bill drove 200 miles southeast to Elkhorn City, Kentucky, to spend a few days with his friends Charlie and Nellie Cox. Charlie Cox was Banks Wood’s brother-in-law, Ruby Wood being Charlie’s sister. The Cox family lived in the country just a few miles from the Kentucky-Virginia state line. Bill spent several days

wandering over the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, hunting squirrels, relaxing, thinking, and praying. He thought about that night in 1946 when the angel of the Lord first met him face to face and told him he was ordained to take a gift of divine healing to the world. The angel told him he would be given two signs to prove he was sent from God. He soon discovered that the first sign was, by its very nature, physically taxing—holding the hands of sick people, feeling the vibrations of their deadly diseases traveling up his arm to his heart. In those early days of his ministry he would pray for hundreds of people a night until he felt dizzy and would almost faint from exhaustion. Then the second sign came and it turned out to be more physically tiring than the first sign. When the anointing of the Holy Spirit began to discern the troubles of people, each vision drained so much of his energy that he could only pray for about 15 to 20 people a night. Over the years he often asked God to remove this hindrance and give him the strength to pray for more people each night in his faith-healing campaigns. In February of 1955 God showed him a

vision of a woman wearing a brown dress who was holding a dying baby. The vision showed him that the baby would be healed. Then the angel of the Lord said, *“When you see this come to pass, your ministry will change.”*

In the spring of 1959, during a faith-healing service Bill conducted in Chicago, that woman in her brown dress came through the prayer-line exactly the way the vision foretold. As soon as her baby was healed, Bill felt a surge of energy. The next vision did not sap his stamina as much as before, and from that moment on, he was able to pray for more people each night in his meetings.

This godsend did not turn out like he had hoped it would. True, with greater stamina he could pray for more people on any given night. But there seemed to be endless numbers of people wanting prayer. At some point in each meeting his physical strength had to fail. During his last campaign in Yakima, he had seen as many as fifty visions per night! Fifty supernatural discernments—and every one of them precisely correct. Did fifty miracles build the peoples’ faith in

God’s promises more than fifteen miracles would have? No, they didn’t. When he finally ran out of strength to continue the prayer-line in Yakima, there were still hundreds of people asking for more supernatural discernment.

Now, as he sat on the side of a hill in Kentucky watching the sun rise above the Appalachian Mountains, he realized he had erred concerning his original commission. God had originally commissioned him to pray for the sick. The angel said if he could get the people to believe him, no disease could resist his prayers. When he had protested that people wouldn’t believe him because of his lowly status, then God had added the two signs for proof of his commission. But a sign is not a destination; it only points toward a destination. Now he could see his mistake. He had been emphasizing the signpost instead of the commission. It was time for his emphasis to change. Bill prayed, “God, forgive me. Let me rise and try again. Help me, Lord. Let me lead this people and set them in the Word, so we can cross Jordan into the Promised Land, where the great

ransomed Church of God will be saved to sin no more.”

Bill spent the rest of the day wandering over green hills and through patches of woods. He would walk for a while, and then sit a while, walk some more, then sit some more, praying, thinking, relaxing. He got back to Charlie’s house around the time Nellie was putting supper on the table. Bill planned to go home the next day.

That night he had trouble sleeping. About three o’clock in the morning he got up to pray. In the soft glow of an electric incandescent lamp he walked slowly back and forth in the room. Suddenly he shivered. Looking up, he was startled to see a hideous dark man standing in front of him. He was not dark like a Black African; his skin was more like a charcoal gray, and it was wrinkled like wrought-iron. The man lunged at him with great clutching hands that locked around his throat. Bill struggled against that iron grip, but he couldn’t break free. Slowly he felt his life being choked away. Then he realized he was holding a small knife in his right hand. Desperately, he thrust his blade

at the dark man’s stomach, but his short blade couldn’t penetrate that metallic skin. At the last possible moment, when it seemed like he could only survive a few more seconds, a bright light flashed in the room, causing the dark man to draw back. Somehow (Bill didn’t know exactly how) the Lord Jesus intervened and saved him.

With his heart still pounding from adrenaline, Bill sat on the edge of his bed and pondered this vision. He believed the dark man with hideous, metallic skin represented the government’s tax case against him. The federal government said he owed personal income tax on all contributions to his campaigns, even though every dollar of that money was used for campaign expenses and none of it went into his personal bank account. Although he hadn’t done anything unethical or illegal, federal investigators kept trying to prove that he had. By now the case had dragged on for five years, and (spiritually speaking) it was constricting his ministry. Now he knew that somehow the Lord would deliver him from the government’s choking grasp.

As summer moved into fall, September seemed reluctant to let the heat of August go. One hot, humid night Bill tossed in his bed for hours, unable to fall asleep. About 3 o'clock Tuesday morning, September 6, 1960, he got out of bed and went to the kitchen to get a drink of water. Then he slowly paced the floor of his living room, praying, watching the floor as walked. As it so often happened in his life, he felt something supernatural enter the room before he saw it. A shiver passed along his spine. This time he looked up and saw a Man who glowed like a brilliant white light. This was not the angel of the Lord who usually came to him when he prayed. Bill did not know who this Man was, but his presence scared him as much as the dark man had scared him two weeks earlier—only in a different way. In the presence of this Man, Bill did not feel threatened. The room shook as this Divine One spoke. Bill was so stunned that he didn't catch the words exactly. Either the Man said, *"In seven more days you will stand as Moses stood,"* or else he said, *"You will be as Moses was,"* or something concerning Moses.

The next Sunday (September 11, 1960) Bill delivered a sermon he called "As I Was With Moses, So I Will Be With Thee." He had wanted to preach this sermon ever since 1952 when he saw that disembodied hand come down in his room, divide the pages of his Bible to Joshua chapter 1, and point out verses 2 through 9. Over the years Bill had read these verses often, believing they had special meaning for his ministry. But this Sunday was the first time he had ever used them as the text for a sermon. He read: *"Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, and go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them... There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I sware unto their fathers to give them."*

"Joshua knew that the command was great," Bill said, "but with this assurance he could be fearless (we would call it reckless) as long as he was pointed in the

right way. So can the church of the living God be reckless and fearless in faith, if we are pointed the right way. God said, ‘As I was with Moses, I will be with you. I’ll not fail you nor forsake you.’ He didn’t fail Moses or Joshua. He will not fail us. He’ll be with us.”

Bill taught that Joshua actually had more to do than Moses. Joshua had to conquer the Promised Land in steps, and at the same time divide it fairly among his people. When Moses led the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt, he typed Jesus Christ delivering His children out of the bondage of sin. When Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan River into the Promised Land, he typed the Holy Spirit leading Christians into a Spirit-filled life, where they can live victoriously, according to God’s Word despite all of Satan’s efforts to defeat them. The Promised Land that Joshua entered was not a type of heaven, nor was it a type of the millennial reign of Christ; it couldn’t be, because the Israelites had to battle for it step by step. Conquering the Promised Land was a type of Christians struggling to inherit all the promises of God, from the baptism

with the Holy Ghost to the Rapture of the Bride of Jesus Christ.

Bill mentioned how Moses made mistakes, yet God still used him because he was ordained for his task. Then Bill confessed his own mistake, telling his congregation how the Lord had revealed to him that he had been emphasizing the signpost more than the destination. God had given him three specific commissions during his years of ministering the gospel. The first was to take a gift of divine healing to the peoples of the world. His second commission was to do the work of an evangelist, with an emphasis upon sound doctrine. His third commission was to show the church her spiritual inheritance. The addition of this third commission did not alter the other two. Somehow he had strayed slightly from his original commission, which was to pray for the sick—simply pray. Bill said, “God can never get away from His commission. I have now had 14 straight years of discernment around the world until I have seen tens of thousands of visions, perhaps a million cases; and I ask you, did you ever see it fail? No, sir. And if the

signpost won't fail, how much more will the commission never fail. The sign is the minor part. So if the sign pointing to the city never fails to tell you the city is there, how much more will the city be there if you go to it. There is the commission!"

"Now my ministry is changing. It's already changed. I will still use the discernment as I feel led of God, but more and more I will just lay my hands on the sick and pray. I want to carry out my commission. I've waited a long time for this, but now I believe we are ready to take the Promised Land."

"Believe it and live! Believe it and get well! I can't make any one believe it. You have to believe it yourself. I have told you the truth. God has testified that it is the truth: by His Word, by His angel, by His signs and wonders for 14 long years. If they aren't going to believe it now, they will never believe it. But the hour has come when I'm tired of staying on this mountain. I want to go across the Jordan River. I want to enter into the full promises of God."

LATER THAT FALL William Branham and Banks Wood drove to Elkhorn City, Kentucky. Charlie Cox had invited them to spend some time at his house. Bill wanted to hunt squirrels a few more days before the 1960 hunting season ended. One morning Banks dropped him off at a patch of trees about four miles from Charlie's home. As Banks drove away in his car, Bill heard a dog barking at the far edge of the woods, moving away from him, the harsh noise getting fainter as the minutes passed.

"If someone has been through here with a dog," He thought, "there is no need of me hunting for a while. The squirrels will all be hiding in their holes. I'll just sit down and wait until they come out."

He pulled his Bible out from his game bag and sat in the dry grass with his back propped against a fence post. Before he could open his Bible, he heard a voice say, "*Rise, and go to the place you call Sportsman's Hollow. There I will speak to you.*"

Obediently he got up and walked toward Sportsman's Hollow, which was about a mile away. It wasn't called Sportsman's Hollow on any map. He had

named it that himself. Once when he was hunting there, he saw sixteen squirrels sitting in one tree. He shot the legal limit, and left the rest of them untouched, which was the sportsman-like thing to do.

On this day when he reached Sportsman's Hollow, he couldn't find any squirrels. Bill sat under an oak tree, expecting the Lord to speak to him immediately. Minutes passed, but he heard no sound except the wind whistling through bare branches and stirring the dry leaves on the ground. His ears stung from the cold. Prostrating himself on a patch of leaves, he prayed. After half an hour, he sat up and propped his back against the oak. Around him the woods remained strangely quiet and somewhat mysterious. He could feel the Holy Spirit in the distance, walking in tune with nature, resonating like a perfect equation:

Two.....times.....two.....equals.....four;
(Coming closer.....)

Two.....times.....two.....equals....four;
(Intensifying....)

Two.....times....two...equals..four;

Two times two equals four!

Suddenly Bill heard that voice again; heard it just as clearly as he heard the leaves rustling in the wind. It was a deep voice, perfect in its tone and inflection. It said, "*Read Malachi chapter four.*"

Bill opened his Bible to the fourth chapter of Malachi, pressing his thumb tightly on the page to keep it from flipping loose in the chilly breeze. It was a short chapter, containing only six verses. He read verses five and six out loud. "*Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he will turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*"

"Yes," He mused, "I believe that. But what do these two phrases mean, 'turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers'?"

He turned to Luke 1:17 and read the angel's prophecy about John the Baptist: "*And he [John] shall go before Him [Jesus] in the spirit and power of*

Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and... and...(He felt the excitement rising inside of him) *and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just...*” There was his answer! Like flowers opening their petals to reveal their beauty, these verses revealed the truth. John the Baptist did turn the hearts of the fathers to the children—that is, he directed the attention of the Jews beyond the faith of their fathers, toward a new, liberating faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. But in Luke 1:17, when the angel quoted Malachi 4:6, the angel stopped in mid verse. He didn’t finish the verse because the remainder of Malachi 4:6 didn’t apply to John’s ministry. It was reserved for a *future* Elijah, who will turn the hearts of the children *back* to their fathers—that is, this latter-day Elijah will turn the attention of the end-time Christians back to the faith that the Apostolic fathers established in the New Testament church.

That would explain why, when the Pharisees asked John if he was Elijah, John said he was not.²⁹⁸ John meant he was not the Elijah of Malachi 4:6b. He was

not the Elijah who would forerun the second coming of Christ. That Elijah would come just before that great and dreadful day of the Lord, after which the earth would “burn like an oven.”

Jesus also spoke of these two separate comings of Elijah. “*And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first? Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.*”²⁹⁹ When Jesus said this, John was already dead. So, when Jesus said, “*Elijah shall first come and restore all things,*” He was speaking of a future event. Besides, John didn’t restore anything. He was a messenger, announcing the coming of the Messiah. This future Elijah would have a ministry of restoration, right before the second coming of Christ.

²⁹⁸ John 1:19-23

²⁹⁹ Matthew 17:10-13 (NKJV)

For the final time that day, he heard that distinctive voice echo through the hollow. It said, “*Read Revelation chapters one, two, and three.*”

Turning to the last book in the Bible, Bill began reading as he was directed. Verse by verse, new insights seemed to jump off the pages at him. It was like the sun had suddenly risen high enough to burn away the fog, and now he could see the meaning of each verse clearly.

Returning to Jeffersonville, he scheduled a week of special meetings for early December so he could share what the Lord had shown him. During the intervening weeks, he reinforced his grasp of history by reviewing the writings of Josephus and Broadbent, as well as Hislop’s *Two Babylons*, Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, Hazeltine’s church history, *How Did It Happen?*—and many other books on Christian history, such as *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, and the Catholic treatise, *Facts of our Faith*.

On Sunday morning December 4, 1960, at Branham Tabernacle, Bill began this series by preaching on Revelation chapter one, mapping out the background

and purpose of John’s vision. The rest of the week he preached on Revelation chapters 2 and 3, every night explaining another church age.

Bill taught that Jesus Christ was the author of the book of Revelation. John merely wrote down what he saw in a series of visions that came to him in the years 95-96 A.D. During this time, John was imprisoned on Patmos, a small island in the Aegean Sea near the border between modern-day Greece and Turkey. John said, “*I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day...*”³⁰⁰ Bill explained that the Lord’s Day in this context is not referring to the seventh day of the week. Rather, the Lord’s Day is that point in human history when Jesus Christ comes and takes physical dominion over this world, fulfilling Revelation 11:15, “*The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever.*”

In his first vision, John, who was a disciple of Jesus, saw Jesus Christ like he had never seen Him before. John saw Jesus walking amid seven lamps, and in His right hand He held seven stars. His white hair and face

³⁰⁰ Revelation 1:10

dazzled with the brightness of His purity, but His tongue looked like a sword and His eyes burned with fire. John collapsed in fear at the sight of him.

On Sunday evening Bill said, “This morning we took the subject of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, who God revealed to us as the supreme deity, the great ‘I AM,’ always. We notice this in the first chapter of Revelation. What is the revelation of? Jesus Christ. What’s the first thing He reveals about Himself? He reveals that He is the God of Heaven—not a triune god, but one God. He says this four times in the first chapter so there will not be a mistake. The first thing you’ve got to know is: Jesus is not just a prophet; He is not a junior god; He is not a secondary god—He is God! Therefore the revelation came forth, and we still continue with it tonight as we study the sevenfold personage of His being. May God help us as we teach on these words. I’ve studied it from a historical standpoint, but wait until I get in the pulpit here for the inspiration.”

“The greatest of all the revelations is the supreme deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. You can’t get to first

base until you believe that. Peter said, ‘Repent, and then see the deity. Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and then you’re ready to go in the Spirit.’³⁰¹ The first thing you have to know is the deity of Christ. Jesus said, ‘I am Alpha and Omega. I’m from A to Z. There’s no more but Me. I was at the beginning; I’ll be at the end. I’m He that was, which is, and shall come—the Almighty.’³⁰² Think of it! That is what the trumpet said. Be careful, John. You’ve entered into the Spirit. Something is going to be revealed to you. What is it? The first of all revelations is, ‘I’m Alpha and Omega.’ (Oh sinner, bow, repent now before the time is too late.) First He let John know who was approaching. Is this King Jesus? King God? King Holy Ghost? He said, ‘I’m all of it. I’m from A to Z. I’m the beginning and the ending. I’m the Immortal, Eternal One!’ Just a little later we’ll watch Him in His sevenfold personage. Watch what He is then.”

After Jesus revealed His supreme deity, He told John that the seven lamps were seven churches, and the

³⁰¹ Acts 2:38

³⁰² Revelation 1:8

seven stars in His hand were angels to those churches. Then He dictated a letter to each church. These were Gentile churches in Asia Minor.³⁰³ The conditions in these particular churches would match the seven distinct periods Christianity would go through before the end. Consequently, these letters prophesied seven ages for the Gentile church. Jesus addressed His followers in each age, giving them encouragement and criticism where needed. He also addressed the people in the false church in each age, those who claimed they were Christians but were not.

Jesus began His dictation by saying, “*Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus, write...*” That meant each church age had an angel. The word *angel* means *messenger*. These were not heavenly messengers. John the prophet wouldn’t need to write a letter to a heavenly angel. No, these angels were men, one messenger for each age. Bill set the church ages and the messengers in their historical order:

1. Rev. 2:1-7	Ephesus	A.D. 53-170	Paul
2. Rev. 2:8-11	Smyrna	A.D. 170-312	Irenaeus

³⁰³ The word “Gentile” means “not Jewish”

3. Rev. 2:12-17	Pergamos	A.D. 312-606	Martin
4. Rev. 2:18-29	Thyatira	A.D. 606-1520	Columba
5. Rev. 3:1-6	Sardis	A.D. 1520-1750	Luther
6. Rev. 3:7-13	Philadelphia	A.D. 1750-1906	Wesley
7. Rev. 3:14-22	Laodicea	A.D. 1906-????	“Elijah”

The messenger to the first church age was Paul. Right after his conversion to Christianity, the Lord said about Paul, “*He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles.*”³⁰⁴ First Paul preached to the Jews. When they rejected his message, he 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.*”³⁰⁵ Paul established Gentile churches all over Asia Minor. He also defined the Christian faith through his letters. In his letter to the Romans he said, “*I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as*

³⁰⁴ Acts 9:15

³⁰⁵ Acts 13:46-47

*I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.”*³⁰⁶

The first age began about 53 A.D. when Paul established the church at Ephesus, teaching basic Christian doctrine to twelve converts, beginning with water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and spiritual baptism with the Holy Ghost.³⁰⁷ The name Ephesus means “relaxed and drifting.” Initially, the first church age followed the gospel that Paul received by revelation from Jesus Christ; but later Christians strayed, listening to other teachers who preached a different gospel.³⁰⁸ That is why Jesus said to the first church age, *“I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”*³⁰⁹ He does commend some qualities in them: *“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”*³¹⁰

The word *Nicolaitan* is a composite of two Greek words: *Nikao*, which means to conquer or overthrow; and *Laos*, which means the laity—that is, the regular

Christians, those who are not official ministers. These Nicolaitans were gradually subjugating the laity by replacing the leadership of the Holy Spirit with the leadership of men. How could such a change take place in a church that was started by God Himself? To answer this question, Bill used the book of Genesis to show that in the beginning every move of God produced brothers with different agendas—like Cain and Abel, Esau and Jacob, Ishmael and Isaac. In each case one brother was a true seed of God, while the other was not; yet both brothers claimed to love God. The ministry of Jesus produced both Simon Peter and Judas Iscariot. Likewise, the first church age gave birth to whole congregations of brothers with different agendas. Whether you call them “believers and make-believers,” or “spiritual and carnal Christians” or “true and false vines,” or “wheat and tares,” or “wise and foolish virgins,” it all comes down to the same thing: one brother is born-again by a spiritual experience; the other is persuaded by an intellectual idea. Putting it another way, one brother is filled with the Holy Ghost and the other brother is not. That is how the Nicolaitan

³⁰⁶ Romans 11:13

³⁰⁷ Acts 19:1-12

³⁰⁸ Galatians 1:6-24, 2:1-10

³⁰⁹ Revelation 2:4

³¹⁰ Revelation 2:6

spirit snuck into the church. Instead of having a spiritual experience, some people became Christians for intellectual reasons or for political convenience. Some of these people set up a hierarchy of leadership to control their brethren. Satan used these carnal Christians and their political system to worm his way into the church.

Prayerfully studying history, Bill identified the messengers to the other six church ages. Paul was his biblical criteria. Since Paul was the messenger to the first church age, the man who stayed the closest to Paul's gospel must be the angel for the church age in which he lived. By this standard, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, was clearly the messenger to the second church age. Irenaeus was a Pauline scholar. His book, *Against the Heresies*, influenced many Christians of his day to stay with the teachings of Paul, rather than stray after contrary teachers.

During the Smyrnaean age (170-312 A.D.) Satan attacked the Christian church from two directions—persecution from without and deception from within. Deception was by far his greatest weapon. In spite of

the efforts of Irenaeus and others, the false vine grew stronger until it finally received a champion in the Emperor Constantine, who embraced Christianity for political gain, making it the state religion.

What began as deeds of the Nicolaitans in the first church age had become a well-formed doctrine in the third, or Pergamos age.³¹¹ Now the state church was organized into a hierarchy of clergy: a pope, cardinals, bishops and priests. Constantine called this state religion the Catholic Church, which means the universal church. Beginning with the Nicene Council in 325, church doctrine was legislated from the top down, using all the state's power to make it law. Worst of all, Constantine influenced the church to mix Christianity with paganism, trying to make a religion that would appeal to everyone in his empire. Catholicism is actually a pagan form of Christianity. Martin of Tours, who was the messenger to the Pergamean age, gallantly withstood this hybridizing of the church. Because the Catholic Church controlled the centers of learning, it became increasingly difficult

³¹¹ Revelation 2:15

for the true vine to preserve the teachings of the apostles. The stage was set for the dark ages.

The Thyatirean church age began around 606 and lasted over 900 years. Historians sometimes call this period “the Dark Ages,” and aptly so, for the light of God’s Word waned so dim, it almost blacked out completely. The Roman Catholic Church developed itself into a tightly-knit organization and dominated Europe, remaining powerful by keeping the Word of God away from the masses, using dogmas, superstitions, and fear to rule people. Yet, even this darkness fit into God’s master plan. Jesus said, *“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies it produces much grain.”*³¹² The seed of God’s Word that was planted in the first church age, had now died and corrupted, but from that original seed an underground church had sprouted and was establishing roots. Columba of Scotland, the messenger to this fourth church age, proved that even amid gross darkness, the true church,

the true seed of God can and will persevere and overcome against all odds.

Finally this kernel of truth buried underground poked a tender green shoot into the air. The age of Sardis began around the year 1517 when its messenger, a young priest named Martin Luther, wrote down his complaints against the Roman Catholic Church and nailed them to the door of All Saints’ Church in Wittenberg, Germany. The public debates that followed rocked Christendom. For centuries the Catholic Church taught that people earned their salvation by doing certain deeds. Luther protested. He read in the letters of Saint Paul: *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”*³¹³ Luther agreed with Paul, that salvation came through faith in Jesus Christ alone.³¹⁴ Unfortunately, Luther’s followers made the same mistake that doomed the Catholic Church: they organized themselves into a system of leadership that excluded the Holy Ghost. Consequently, Jesus said to the age of

³¹² John 12:24 (NKJV)

³¹³ Ephesians 2:8-9

³¹⁴ Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38

Sardis, *“I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”*³¹⁵ Eventually the Lutheran church age became just as spiritually dead as the Roman Catholic Church, strangled by the politically-motivated leadership of men.

The Philadelphian church age began around 1750. Its messenger was John Wesley, a minister in the Church of England. In 1738 Wesley listened to someone reading Martin Luther’s preface to Paul’s letter to the Romans. Paul and Luther inspired Wesley to embrace a “saving faith” in Jesus Christ. Wesley spent the rest of his life passing on this “saving faith” to thousands of people in England, and to other parts of the world through missionary programs. That is why Jesus said to the Philadelphian age, *“I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it.”*³¹⁶ However, Wesley added a further dimension to Luther’s message. Wesley preached that after salvation comes to the individual through faith in Jesus, the individual must move on into sanctification. In other words, people who really accept Jesus Christ

as their Savior will live sanctified, holy lives.³¹⁷ Because of Wesley’s systematic approach to godliness, his followers called themselves Methodists. Eventually they formed themselves into a denomination. By adopting a variation of the Roman Catholic system of church government, the Methodist Church allowed the leadership of men to supersede, and thus limit the leadership of God’s spirit.

The Laodicean church age began in 1906 when God restored the gifts of the Holy Spirit to a group of people at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California.³¹⁸ Starting with that little group of Christians, the gifts of the Spirit spread rapidly from church to church, causing a worldwide revival that became the modern-day Pentecostal movement. Alas, what began with such promise eventually followed in the footsteps of the preceding ages by denominating. These Pentecostal people organized their movement, erected their doctrinal fences, imbedded their fence posts in concrete, and closed all the gates so the Holy

³¹⁵ Revelation 3:1 (NKJV)

³¹⁶ Revelation 3:8 (NKJV)

³¹⁷ John 17:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; James 2:17-20; 1 Peter 1:2

³¹⁸ Acts 2:3, 19:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10

Spirit could not take them farther up the road to higher ground. Jesus rebuked the Laodicean church age, saying, *“Because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. You say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and do not know you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.”*³¹⁹ The seventh church age is so tightly organized that Jesus portrays Himself on the outside, wanting in. *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”*³²⁰

Laodicea is the last church age before Jesus Christ returns to earth, this time in judgment. God said through Malachi, *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn...the heart of the children to their fathers...”* So the messenger to the seventh church age will have the spirit of Elijah, just as John the Baptist did.

³¹⁹ Revelation 3:16-17 (NKJV)

³²⁰ Revelation 3: 20 (NKJV)

Bill taught, “When this great Elijah comes at the end of this age, he’ll be taking the message of Pentecost to turn the children to the faith of the fathers. He’ll be rebuking Christians in Laodicea because they didn’t keep the same faith that was back there at the beginning.”

“I often wondered, ‘Would this man just be a preacher, then?’ Elijah did all miracles and no preaching. But when his spirit was upon John, it did all preaching and no miracles. Why? Jesus was going to follow him and He would do the miracles. Malachi said, *‘For unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings.’* John had no need of doing miracles; he just announced the coming of the Christ.”

The inference here is that Elijah in the end-time will both preach and do miracles. Bill continued to flesh him out.

“Like John, this end-time Elijah will be misunderstood. He’ll be such a great, powerful man before the Lord that some people will mistake him for

the Messiah.³²¹ What kind of a nature will Elijah have? First, he'll be a mighty prophet who will stay true to the Word of God, for Elijah was true and John was true. Doing signs and wonders, he will turn the hearts of the children back to the faith of their Pentecostal fathers. He will hate fancy women. Elijah did with Jezebel. John did with Herodias. Both men, prophets with the same spirit, hated organized religion, like these Christian denominations. Something in their spirits cried out against the thing."

"Like Elijah and John, this end-time prophet will be a lover of the wilderness. He will not be a learned person. Elijah the Tishbite was not a learned person; neither was John the Baptist."³²²

"This prophet will also be a moody person. Elijah and John both had moody spells: Elijah felt discouraged after he fled from Jezebel. John felt discouraged when he sat in Herod's prison."³²³

"The first Elijah came when Israel was ready to be delivered from the hands of paganism. John also came

at a time of deliverance. John said, *'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before Him. He who has the Bride is the Bridegroom; but the friend of the Bridegroom, who stands and hears Him, rejoices greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.'*³²⁴ John preached and made himself known just before the coming of the Lord, right at the time of the Lord's manifestation."

During this week Bill used a blackboard and white chalk to illustrate the amount of light (spiritual truth) that was present in each church age. Drawing seven circles in a row across the blackboard, he divided each circle with a diagonal line and shaded the upper part of these circles with his white chalk to represent the light in each age. The first circle, representing the first church age, was three-fourths light and one-fourth darkness. The second circle was about half and half. The third circle contained one-fourth light and three-fourths darkness. In the fourth church age the circle was almost all black, except for a thin strip of white on

³²¹ Luke 3:15; John 1:19-20, 3:28

³²² Luke 1:80

³²³ 1 Kings 19:1-4; Matthew 11:2-3, respectively. Note: Before John had his doubts in prison, he had already declared Jesus to be the redeeming Lamb of God (John 1:29-36).

³²⁴ John 3:22-30 (NKJV)

top. The light increased a little in the fifth age, and a little more in the sixth, but in the seventh church age it decreased again until the line of circles ended in complete darkness.

On Sunday morning, January 8, 1961, Bill preached his third sermon on Revelation chapter four; a sermon he called “Throne of Mercy and Judgment.” He had just finished his message and was about to pray for the sick when the Pillar of Fire appeared in the air at the back of the room, shrinking into a ball of light, looking like a miniature sun. Because Bill was facing his audience, he saw it first. There were approximately 350 people sitting in the pews. They stirred and murmured uneasily, feeling the presence of something supernatural. Then some of them saw a light appear on the wall behind the pulpit. Gladys Dauch screamed. Bill turned and looked behind him. This light on the wall behind him was not as intense as the light at the back of the room, but otherwise it was the same in all its features. Bill explained to his audience that the light on the wall behind him was the reflection of that

supernatural light at the back of the room. He said, “You’re seeing one and I’m seeing two.”

A series of visions followed. Bill spoke as he watched the visions reveal things. He said, “There is a man sitting on the outside here, under this line looking over towards that light. It struck him. He’s from Seymour, Indiana, and he’s had a stroke. Sir, if you’ll believe, God will heal you of that stroke. Amen! Believe now.”

“Lady, do you believe with all your heart? If the Lord God, Creator of heavens and earth, will let me do something to prove to you that it is God, then will you believe with all your heart? You have a nervous condition caused by menopause. Jesus heals you.”

“The lady sitting next to her... you’re not from here either; you’re from Somerset, Kentucky. Even though I’m a stranger to you, I know it’s not you who wants to be made well—it’s your son. He’s in Virginia. He has ulcers, and there is another thing wrong with him—he’s unsaved. You’re praying for him now. Mrs. Baker, return to Somerset and believe with all your heart, and Jesus Christ will make your son well.”

He continued in this manner for about fifteen minutes, going in and out of visions regularly. Between each vision he watched that supernatural ball of light at the back of the sanctuary change. Gradually it was darkening like an eclipse of the sun. Its reflection on the wall behind him underwent the same progression, looking like an eclipse of the moon. Every time Bill came out of a vision he saw that more of the disk had darkened. By the time he came out from his third vision, that little sun at the back of the room was almost totally covered by a shadow, its light only a tiny fraction of what it was at first. After two more visions, it lightened a little, but after the next vision it darkened and faded completely away. Each of its seven phases had looked exactly like the circles of the church ages Bill had drawn on his blackboard. Bill explained that symbolically, the sun represents Christ and the moon represents the church. The moon has no light of its own; it merely reflects the light of the sun. Likewise the church merely reflects the light of Christ.

Many people in the congregation, including Gladys Dauch, watched the waxing and waning of that light

on the wall behind the pulpit. They saw all seven stages, the last stage being the darkness of a total eclipse. Bill held this incident in his heart as a confirmation from God that what he taught about the seven church ages was true.

Chapter 83

The Nature of God Explained

1961

STARTING IN MID JANUARY 1961, William Branham preached a week in Beaumont, Texas; then a couple of nights in Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona; then

two weeks in Long Beach, California, at the First Assembly of God Church. On Saturday morning, February 11, 1961, he spoke to several hundred people at a Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship breakfast held at Clifton's Cafeteria in Los Angeles. His message was being videotaped for broadcast on television the following night.

Knowing that he would be addressing the nation, Bill used this opportunity to share a little of what he had learned from the seven church ages. He explained the difference between denominations and real Christianity, and showed how Satan has tried to defeat Christ by joining the church and deceiving it from within. Bill used John 15: 4 and 5 as his text, where Jesus said, "*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.*" Usually this Scripture is applied to the individual Christian and his or her relationship with Christ. Today Bill took it a step

farther, applying it to Christian churches through the ages and their relationships with Christ. As individuals gather into groups and collectively choose who they will follow, these groups produce fruits that reflect the ideas of their leaders.

To illustrate this point, he described an unusual tree he saw at Mr. Sharrit's house in Phoenix the previous week. Each branch of this tree bore a different kind of citrus fruit. When Bill asked Mr. Sharrit what kind of tree it was, he said it was an orange tree, but many other citrus branches were grafted into the trunk, and each branch bore fruit according to the tree from which it came. Bill had asked Mr. Sharrit if every branch would produce oranges next year. Mr. Sharrit told him that even though the trunk was an orange tree, each grafted branch would bear its own distinct citrus fruit, whether oranges, tangerines, grapefruits, lemons or limes; whatever the branch was in the beginning, that determined the kind of fruit it would produce. However, when the trunk of the tree grows a new branch, that branch will produce more oranges.

Bill then drew a parallel for his audience in Los Angeles. He said, “Jesus Christ is the Tree of Life. When this Tree started out in the book of Acts, the branches all bore the same fruit—that is, they bore Holy Ghost filled, Bible-believing Christians. Then Satan infiltrated the church and used his influence to graft other branches into the trunk. Eventually these branches assumed names like Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and others. They bore lemons, grapefruits and whatever. You see, it uses the name of Christianity and it thrives off of the life in the parent Tree, but it bears its own denominational fruit. But if that orange tree ever puts out another limb, it will bear oranges like it did at the beginning.”

Finishing his address, he stepped away from the microphone to shake hands with those near him. A General Overseer of the Assemblies of God denomination, standing near the microphone, said in a loud voice, “I don’t think Brother Branham really meant that. After all, didn’t Paul say we are all grafted into the tree?”

Bill turned to the Overseer and said, “I have to mean it, sir. It is ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ Paul did say we are wild olive branches grafted into a domestic olive tree.³²⁵ But an olive is an olive, so that’s not what I’m talking about. God still wants oranges growing on an orange tree, not lemons, limes or grapefruits. I’m speaking to you in a parable.”

At that moment a young man walked up and shook Bill’s hand. “Brother Branham,” He said, “my name is Danny Henry, and I just want to tell you I agree with you. I hope this doesn’t sound sacrilegious, but your sermon could be the twenty-third chapter in the book of Revelation.”

Bill thanked Danny for this compliment, although it embarrassed him a little because the book of Revelation has only 22 chapters, and God said nothing should be added to it.³²⁶ Still, he knew what Danny meant. He was saying that Bill’s message matched the Scriptures perfectly.

Danny Henry was wearing a suit coat over a white shirt. He had a bow tie around his neck. His dark hair,

³²⁵ Romans 11:17-24

³²⁶ Revelation 22:18

square jaw and handsome features made him look like a movie star. Later Bill learned he was a cousin to the actress Jane Russell. Now Danny put one arm over Bill's shoulder and asked, "Can I pray for you, Brother Branham?"

"Certainly, my brother," Bill replied.

Danny prayed only a few words in English before strange syllables flowed from his tongue. He was standing close enough to the microphone so that everyone in the dining room heard this melodic language. Whatever it was, it was not English. Thirty seconds later, Danny Henry stopped speaking and stared around the room as though disoriented.

Someone asked, "What language was that?"

"I don't know," Danny answered.

Someone else said, "He spoke in an unknown tongue."

A heavy-set woman who was sitting at a nearby table stood and said, "That wasn't an unknown tongue; it was French. I know because I was born in Lucerne, Switzerland, and French is my native language. My name is Annette Long and I now live in Louisiana.

Young man, how did you learn such a peculiar French dialect?"

"I don't know any French," said Danny Henry, a little bewildered, "but this same thing happened to me last week at the businessmen's convention in Phoenix. They didn't teach us about things like this in the Baptist church."

At another table a man wearing glasses stood and said, "She's right; that young man spoke in a French dialect. My name is John Wildrienne and I was born in Liege, Belgium, so French is also my native language."

From the far side of the dining room, another handsome, dark-haired man walked forward and introduced himself as Victor Le Doux, a Frenchman who worked as a French interpreter at the United Nations building in New York. He said that he had also understood the young man's words.

"Wait," said Bill. "Before anyone says anything more, I want you people who know French to write out this prophecy. Then we'll compare what everyone wrote."

Someone brought paper and pens, and the three people sat at a table and wrote what they had heard. All three accounts matched, even down to the punctuation. The prophecy said:

Because thou hast chosen the narrow path, the harder way, which thou hast walked of thy own choosing, thou hast picked the correct and precise decision, and it is My way. Because of this momentous decision, a huge portion of heaven awaits thee. What a glorious decision thou hast made. This in itself is that which will give, and make come to pass, the tremendous victory in love divine.

WILLIAM BRANHAM spent most of April 1961 in Illinois. He preached for a week in Bloomington at the Illinois Wesleyan University. On Saturday, April 22, he arrived in Chicago to begin a week-long faith-healing campaign sponsored by the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship. After his first meeting, he

returned to his hotel room sometime after midnight. Outside a storm was blowing over the city. Lightning flashed intermittently, followed by great crashes of thunder rippling across the sky. Bill opened his suitcase to get his pajamas. Suddenly the room felt different, eerily charged with something supernatural. Soon a light appeared in mid-air and the angel of the Lord stepped into the room.

With arms folded over his chest, the angel said, "Go and stand by the window."

Bill walked over to the window and looked out. Because the darkened glass was like a mirror, he could see both the storm outside and the reflection of the angel at the same time.

"*The Chicago Ministerial Association has set a trap for you,*" the angel said. "*They will invite you to speak at a breakfast next Tuesday where they are going to challenge you on your doctrine of baptism. They are hoping to catch you off guard and embarrass you. Be sure to go, for I will be with you. Tomorrow morning Henry Carlson will take you to breakfast where you*

will sit with Tommy Hicks. This is what I want you to tell them...”

The rain-streaked window blurred and deepened until it became a tunnel into another dimension—a dimension where he could see the future.

The next morning Henry Carlson, head of the Full Gospel Business Men’s chapter in Chicago, called to ask, “Brother Branham, can I take you out to breakfast?”

“Yes, Brother Carlson. I want to talk to Tommy Hicks anyway.”

“Brother Branham, I don’t know that Brother Hicks will be there.”

“Oh, he’ll be there. The Lord showed me that and more in a vision last night. I’ll tell you about it over breakfast.”

When they got to the restaurant, there sat Tommy Hicks. They joined him at his table. After ordering their meals, Carlson said, “Brother Branham, next Tuesday morning I have you scheduled to speak at a breakfast in front of the Greater Chicago Ministerial Association. At least 350 ministers will be there. It

will be a great opportunity for them to get to know you better.”

Bill nodded, knowingly. “Yes, it does sound like a great opportunity. Brother Hicks, would you speak for me that morning?”

Tommy Hicks almost choked on a bite of toast. After clearing his throat with a swallow of orange juice, he said, “Oh, Brother Branham, I couldn’t do that.”

“Why not? I’ve done you many favors. You are a doctor of divinity. How am I going to speak to all those educated men with my seventh grade education?”

Henry Carlson’s face reddened. “Uh... Brother Branham... uh... Brother Hicks couldn’t do that.”

“Why?” Bill pressed. They didn’t answer. “You know why, but you don’t want to tell me. It’s because those ministers have a question-trap set for me. They plan to challenge me on my doctrine of water baptism, the serpent’s seed, and my position that ‘speaking in tongues’ is not the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Brother Carlson, for this breakfast you rented a hotel banquet room with green walls, didn’t you.”

“That’s right.”

“You’re not going to get that place.”

“But I’ve already paid a deposit on it.”

“I don’t care; it won’t be available. That is ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ We are going to be in another building, in a room that has brown walls. I will sit at a corner table. Dr. Mead will sit on my right; and beside him will sit a Buddhist monk. Dr. Needle will sit on my left, and beside him will sit that old colored minister and his wife.” Bill continued to describe where other ministers and their wives would be sitting.

“Mercy goodness!” said Tommy Hicks. “I don’t think I’ll even go.”

“Yes, come on. You’ve seen the Lord in healing; now watch Him in battle.”

As it turned out, the employee who had taken Carlson’s deposit wasn’t aware that an orchestra ensemble had already reserved the hotel’s banquet hall for that Tuesday morning. Consequently, Carlson’s money was refunded and he had to switch the ministerial breakfast to the Town & Country

Restaurant. When Bill arrived, he was not surprised to find the room had brown walls.

Henry Carlson was surprised. After breakfast, he stepped up to the microphone and said, “Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce Brother Branham. You might disagree with his doctrine, but I’ll say one thing about him: he is fearless in his beliefs. Three days ago he told me everything that’s happened this morning, including where many of you would sit. Now, Brother Branham, the floor is yours.”

Bill began by reading Acts 26:13-19, where Paul said, “I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.” Then he said, “I know you have asked me here this morning to challenge me on my doctrine. Very well, let’s start with water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I want someone to show me one place in the Bible where anyone was baptized any other way than in the name of Jesus Christ. Take your Bible, stand by my side and disprove anything I have taught on baptism.”

All noise in the dining room hushed; not even a fork clinked against a plate. “Then if you can’t disprove it,

why don't you believe it? Or at least stay off my back."

Over the next hour, Bill explained his beliefs on water baptism, beginning with the nature of God. "I am not 'Jesus Only' and I'm not a Trinitarian; I am a Christian. The word *trinity* is not in the Bible. I do not believe there are three individual gods. I believe there is one God in three offices—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—which is God condescending to men.

"In the Old Testament God appeared to Israel in the form of a Pillar of Fire, which was the *logos*, the Angel of the Covenant; which was Christ, because in John 8:58 Jesus said, '*Before Abraham was, I am.*' Back under the law, He was so holy that if anyone touched the mountain where He was talking to Moses, that person would die.³²⁷ That same God wanted to work the knowledge of Himself back into His creation. He could not come near them because they were sinful, and the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin; it only covered sin.³²⁸ So the same God that was the Pillar of Fire became flesh through His Son,

and dwelt in a body called Jesus Christ. Colossians 2:9 says, '*In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*' 1 Timothy 3:16 says, '*Great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh...*' In John 14 Jesus told Philip, '*He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.*' 2 Corinthians 5:19 says, '*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.*'

"God cannot be three persons; neither can Jesus be His own Father. Both extremes are wrong. Isaiah said, '*The Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel,*' which means 'God with us.'³²⁹ So, the Messiah will be God. Then it happened, just like Isaiah prophesied: the great Jehovah overshadowed a woman, created an egg in her, and through that blood cell came forth the body of Christ. Jesus was neither Jew nor Gentile. We are saved by the Blood of God. Therefore, when we come to the altar and by faith put our hand upon His head, and feel His tearing and agony at Calvary, and confess our sins, believing that we are wrong and that He died in our

³²⁷ Exodus 19:10-25; Hebrews 12:18-21

³²⁸ Hebrews 9:6-9

³²⁹ Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23

place—then His Life comes back upon us. The Bible says that life is in the blood.³³⁰ When Jesus died and His blood cells broke, it wasn't merely the blood of a man spilling; God's life was released. When the worshipper lays his hands by faith upon the Son of God and confesses his sins, the life of God (not the life of another man) comes back into the believer. The Greek word for this life is *zoë*, which is translated as eternal life, but literally means God's own life. Then we can recognize ourselves as sons and daughters of God.

“God is a spirit... and He created little Jehovah. He could have come as a full-grown man, but instead He came as a baby—Jehovah playing like a boy; Jehovah working as a carpenter; Jehovah hanging between heaven and earth, dying to redeem His children—not another person, but God Himself in the office of a son. Next He became God in us. We are part of Him. On the day of Pentecost the Pillar of Fire separated Himself amongst His church.³³¹ Jesus said in John

14:20, *‘At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.’*

“Now can you understand the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? God condescending... Jehovah God back there couldn't touch the human race because of His own law of holiness. So Jehovah God became sin for us and paid the price so that the same Jehovah God could come and live in us. It is God above us, God with us, God in us—not three gods, but one God. Professors go crazy trying to figure it out because it is a revelation. It has to be revealed to you.

“Now let's look at water baptism. In Matthew 28:19 Jesus said, *‘Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’* Ten days later, in Acts 2:38 Peter said, *‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.’* Is this a contradiction? I don't believe it is. Notice in Matthew 16 Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was. Peter said, *‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’* Jesus said, *‘Blessed are you, Simon, because flesh and blood didn't reveal this*

³³⁰ Leviticus 17:11; John 6:53

³³¹ Acts 2:1-4

to you. You got the revelation from My Father who is in heaven. Upon this rock...what rock? Upon the revelation, I will build My Church, and the gates of hell won't prevail against it.' Peter was standing there when Jesus said go baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Ten days later he did exactly what Jesus said. He had the revelation of God, and the keys to the Kingdom. He knew that Father is not a name, Son is not a name, and Holy Ghost is not a name; they are the titles that show what He is. He is a Father; He is a Son; He is a Holy Spirit. Jesus said, 'Baptize in the N-A-M-E (singular), the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' That name is the Lord Jesus Christ.

"So, when I baptize, I recognize both parts: His titles and His actual name. I say, 'Father, as Thou has commissioned us to go unto all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I now baptize this person in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.' That covers both sides of the argument and lets me fellowship with all of you.

"To summarize the mystery of the Godhead: I believe that God our Father overshadowed a virgin called Mary and created in her a blood cell which brought forth Jesus Christ. He was the Son of God, the tabernacle in which God veiled Himself in flesh, manifesting Himself among us. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. That blood cell was broken at Calvary for the remission of our sins, and the Spirit went out of Him and came back upon the Church. The Holy Spirit (Christ, the *logos*) is in us now by the Holy Ghost baptism—Christ separated Himself, giving His life to each one of us that we might be the church of God."

When the meeting ended, Bill was surprised by the warm, even somewhat enthusiastic reception he received from these ministers. Many said that his message helped them to understand the Godhead better, and some even said they would come to Jeffersonville and get baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. On this encouraging note, Bill left Chicago. His next meetings would be in northwestern Canada during the middle of May. Then he would travel

farther north to hunt for a week in the Canadian Rockies with Ed Byskal.

BACK IN THE FALL of 1959, William Branham got a letter from Reverend Ed Byskal of Dawson Creek, Canada, offering to take him hunting in northern British Columbia. Eighteen months later Billy Paul Branham wrote to Ed Byskal saying his father would like to take a vacation. Billy Paul suggested Ed Byskal arrange for a short faith-healing campaign in Grande Prairie, Alberta, and another campaign in Dawson Creek, British Columbia, for sometime in the spring of 1961. Afterward they would go hunting wherever Reverend Byskal wanted to take them. Ed Byskal promptly scheduled some meetings and arranged for a hunting trip in May.

Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie are two small towns situated over 500 miles north of the United States/Canadian border, and 75 miles apart on either side of the Alberta/British Columbia provincial line. (These towns lie on the western edge of the Canadian

prairie, not far from the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains.) On May 14, 1961, Bill and Billy Paul drove to Grande Prairie, where they checked into a two-story motel. Then Bill called Reverend Byskal to let him know he had arrived. Soon he heard a knock on his door.

The man who entered looked very young. He was thin for his height, and his hair was thick and dark. A big smile covered his boyish face.

Billy Paul introduced him. “Daddy, this is Brother Byskal.”

Sitting on the edge of his bed, Bill raised his right finger straight up and said, “You’re Brother Byskal? I was expecting a fifty-year-old man. You’re just a child.”

The younger man blushed. “Well, I’m 27 years old.”

Although Ed Byskal was young in his ministerial work, he was a seasoned hunter and woodsman. He grew up in northern British Columbia and spent much of his childhood exploring the rugged wilderness around him. He spent several years doing missionary work among the Indians, and then three and a half

years as the pastor of a small Pentecostal church in Dawson Creek. One member of his congregation, Harvey “Bud” Southwick, had just become a certified guide for a large wilderness area about 400 miles north of Dawson Creek. That was the wilderness where Ed Byskal planned to take Bill when the meetings in Grande Prairie and Dawson Creek ended.

On Friday, May 19, 1961, Bill began his three-night campaign in Dawson Creek, preaching in the United Church building, which could hold several hundred people. That night the first person in the prayer-line was an elderly woman. Bill talked to her for a few minutes like Jesus talked to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. When the vision came, he said, “You are not standing here for yourself. You are praying for a man who is shadowed by death. He has cancer. The man doesn’t live in this city. He lives north of here in a place called Fort St. John.” Wide-eyed, the woman nodded and verified it was the truth. Bill continued, “Go your way and believe.”

On Saturday night Bill moved quickly from his sermon into the prayer portion of the service. He did

not call a prayer-line that night. When the visions began, he merely pointed to one person after another, telling them exactly what they were praying about and what their needs were—once, twice, thrice, four times. When he came to the fifth person, he said, “There’s a lady sitting here on the right side. Can’t you see that light over the woman? She has rheumatoid arthritis and a growth on her breast. She’s from Fort St. John. Her name is Agnes. I don’t know you. I’ve never seen you before in my life. If everything I’ve said about you is true, then stand up.” Agnes stood and Bill said, “You have your request.”

After two more visions, Bill urged everyone who was sick to accept their healing in Jesus’ name; and he urged everyone to praise the Lord Jesus. The sanctuary filled with the melody of hundreds of people singing: “I love Him, I love Him, because He first loved me; and purchased my salvation on Calvary’s tree.” Suddenly Bill saw one more vision. His voice cut through the melody, “What’s the matter, soldier boy? You’re not going to commit suicide.” The audience hushed, listening. Bill continued, “The devil is lying to

you, boy. You've only got a phobia. He's lying to you. He'll drive you insane if you believe him. I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to renounce the devil and accept Jesus Christ as your healer. You'll go back a real man."

Other than using the term 'soldier', Bill did not identify the person to whom this discernment was directed. When he came out of the vision, he led the congregation in a few more songs, and then closed the service. An explanation would come two days later in a most unexpected way.

The Alaskan Highway begins at Dawson Creek and runs northwest through 1,500 miles of wilderness to Fairbanks, Alaska. It was built during World War II as a military supply route. Although it is called the Alaskan Highway, most of its length is in British Columbia. At five o'clock on Monday morning Ed Byskal, Chris Berg and William Branham headed northwest along the Alaskan Highway toward their hunting destination 400 miles away.

They drove about 40 miles and were approaching the small town of Fort St. John, when Bill said, "Friday

night a woman in the prayer-line was praying for a man in Fort St. John."

Ed Byskal said, "Brother Branham, that woman was a friend of my mother and father. I've known her since I was a little boy. Her name is Sister Klundt."

Their car was still about a quarter of a mile outside of Fort St. John, clipping along at 55 miles per hour. Bill pointed to a big white farmhouse on their right. "The man she is praying for lives in that house." Surprised, Ed Byskal could not answer, because he did not know. Having seen the pinpoint accuracy of Bill's discernment in Grande Prairie and Dawson Creek, he had no reason to doubt this further statement. It would be easy enough to verify later.

At noon they stopped to eat lunch in Fort Nelson, a tiny town carved out of the wilderness. They entered a café in a hotel. While they were waiting for their soup, they saw a 1938 Ford pickup truck park outside the café. Two men got out of the pickup—a tall, young man with dark hair, who was wearing the uniform of a United States Army private; and a shorter, older man with sandy-colored hair, who was wearing civilian

clothes. They came in the café. The older man looked around, as if deciding where he should sit. When he spotted Bill, he smiled. While the soldier sat at a table near the door, the civilian strode over to Bill's table, stuck out his hand and said excitedly, "Hello, Brother Branham."

Startled, Bill shook the man's hand. "Do I know you?"

"No, but I know you. I was in your meetings at Dawson Creek. Do you remember the night you singled out that soldier?"

Puzzled, Bill looked across the table. "Brother Ed, do you remember that?"

"Yes, I do. You said, 'You're not going to commit suicide, soldier boy. That's the devil talking to you.'"

"That's right," the sandy-haired man agreed. Jerking his thumb over his shoulder, he added, "There is the soldier. He has tried to commit suicide three times in the past 14 months. The army doctors don't know what is wrong with him. They put him in my custody and I drove all the way from Fairbanks to get him to your meetings, but he wasn't able to get into the

prayer-line. Brother Branham, would you pray for him here?"

"Sure," Bill said, just as the waitress arrived with their food. "Perhaps you could wait until after we've eaten our lunch."

"Certainly. We have to eat, too." The man returned to his table and ordered his meal.

When Bill finished eating, he walked over to the soldier's table and offered to pray for him outside. The soldier stood and both men left the café. They walked together along a wooden sidewalk to the edge of the hotel. Bill talked to the soldier a few minutes to contact his spirit. "Son, always remember that Jesus Christ died to save you from your sins." The soldier seemed both eager to listen, and yet at the same time strangely aloof. Soon Bill felt the angel of the Lord by his right side. Bill removed his battered cowboy hat and held it against his blue denim shirt. Immediately a vision pierced to the heart of the soldier's problem. Bill said, "I see you have a lovely Christian wife and two little children; but you've developed a crippling mental complex that has caused you to commit

homosexual acts with young men.” The soldier’s face brightened into a smile. Thrusting his fist in the air three times, he cried, “I’m free! I’m free! I’m free!” They walked back to their vehicles, and the soldier said to the other men, “In all the world, only my wife knows everything this man told me. As soon as he revealed my secret, I knew I was free from my sins.”

Later that day they arrived at their base camp near Muncho Lake. Bud Southwick was waiting for them. Bud was 40 years old. Before 1961 he had been a cattle rancher near Dawson Creek. That was where he gave his life to Christ one night after hearing Ed Byskal preach. Recently the Canadian government awarded him exclusive hunting-guide privileges to a large tract of wilderness in British Columbia. Now he and his wife Lela and their five sons were living in a wooden barrack left behind by highway construction workers. Bill Branham was his first client.

That night Ed Byskal filled the barrack with stories about the discernment and miracles he had seen in Grande Prairie and Dawson Creek. When he told them about Mrs. Klundt praying for a man with cancer who

lived in a white farmhouse a quarter of a mile south of Fort St. John, Bud Southwick said, “I know the man who lives in that house. I’ve known him for years. His name is Ed Thomas, and I know he’s dying with cancer.” Ed Byskal nodded at this confirmation.

After listening to his pastor talk for an hour about the wonderful things he had seen God do in the last few days, Bud Southwick asked Bill if he could see a vision that would help his younger brother, who was having three or four epileptic seizures a day. Bill explained that he could not make a vision come; God sent them by His sovereign will. But he did promise Bud he would pray about it.

The next morning five men mounted their horses and rode into the wilderness—Bud Southwick and his eighteen-year-old son, Blaine; Ed Byskal, Chris Berg and Bill. Between them they led a string of 16 packhorses. At first the trail was relatively dry and easy to follow. They rode through valleys thick with shrubs and aspen groves, along with scattered lodgepole pine trees and Engelmann spruce. As they moved higher into the mountains they saw more

ponderosa pine trees, along with Douglas-fir and tamarack. Although the lower valleys were sprinkled with colorful spring flowers, the higher peaks still clung to their winter toppings of snow. That is where they were going to hunt for bear—in the high country. Unfortunately, three days into their trip a Chinook wind blew, rapidly melting the snow pack on the upper slopes, which in turn caused the lower rivers to swell until they became impassible.³³² Disappointed, Bill agreed with Bud Southwick that they had to turn back.

The rising rivers and streams had made some parts of the trail boggy, and one of the packhorses strayed into a bog and got stuck. Dismounting, Bill waded through the mud, cut the pack off the horse's back and looped a rope around its neck. Tying the other end of the rope to his saddle horn, he stood beside his own horse and coaxed it forward, pulling the stranded horse out of the bog. Bill wiped the mud from his clothes as best he could; then he mounted his horse and wrangled the packhorse back on the trail. That is when he saw a man walking toward him through the air. Pulling back

on his reins, Bill leaned back in his saddle and watched. The man fell into convulsions, kicking and thrashing, rolling over and over. When the man's convulsions stopped, Bill saw a wood burning stove and a burning shirt. Other details rounded out the story. Then the vision ended and he was again looking at pine trees on both sides of a muddy trail.

Spurring his horse forward, Bill galloped along the trail until he passed the string of packhorses and caught up with Bud Southwick. Then he pulled on his reins, slowing his horse until it matched the plodding steps of Bud's horse. The air was sweet with smell of moist dirt, bunchberry bushes, conifer trees, horse sweat and leather. As the two men rode side by side, Bill said, "Bud, I just learned your brother is about 30 years old and he's about six feet tall. He's had epilepsy since he was three years old. It's hereditary. Your grandfather had it too."

"That's right, Brother Bill. Did you see a vision?"

"Yes, Bud, and I have 'Thus saith the Lord' for you. Ask your brother to come up here to your cabin. The first time he has an epileptic fit, take the shirt he's

³³² A Chinook is a warm wind that sometimes blows across the northwest region of the United States in the otherwise colder months of winter.

wearing, throw it in your wood stove and say, ‘This I do in the name of Jesus Christ.’ As long as he believes, he’ll never have another seizure. Do you believe me enough to do that?”

“Yes, I’ll do it.”

They set up camp around nine o’clock that evening. The sky was still bright with daylight. At that latitude during May the sun doesn’t set. Around eleven o’clock at night the sky dusks for an hour while the sun makes a loop near the horizon and starts back up. After supper, Bill asked Ed if he would like to go for a walk with him. They took their guns just in case they saw some rabbits or partridges.

Ever since this trip began, Ed Byskal had been hoping for a chance to be alone with Bill so he could ask him three doctrinal questions. Now that he had his chance, he wasn’t sure how to ask them. When he was 14, he sat near the front row in one of Bill’s meetings and saw many miracles, including the eyes of a cross-eyed girl that went from crossed to straight in an instant. Since then he respected Bill’s ministry and followed its progress through articles in various

Christian magazines. But lately he had been troubled by rumors that Bill was teaching unorthodox doctrines. Ed could not understand how God could bless William Branham so mightily in his faith-healing ministry, and then forsake him in his teaching. They strolled along the trail, enjoying the sights and sounds of the forest, talking about many things. After a while they sat on a log to rest. Bill said, “Brother Eddie, this afternoon while I was riding, He came to me there on the trail. I believe you have three questions you want to ask me. The first question is about water baptism in Jesus’ name; the second one is about the Godhead; and your third question is about the serpent’s seed.”

Ed Byskal was so astonished that he almost fell off the log. He felt as though he was standing before the judgment seat of God and nothing could be hidden. “That is true, Brother Branham. I have wanted to ask you those three questions for a long time.” After Bill answered his first two questions satisfactorily, their conversation turned to the third. “Brother Branham, how can you say that Cain was not Adam’s son? Genesis 4:1 says: *Adam knew Eve his wife; and she*

conceived and bare Cain; and said, 'I have gotten a man from the Lord.'"

“Brother Eddie, that is exactly the truth; all life comes from the Lord. But you need to read the next verse, which says: *‘And she again bare his brother Abel...’* You see? Cain and Abel were twins. They had the same mother, but not the same father. The Bible is careful to say Adam knew his wife once, yet two children were born. Remember, at first the serpent wasn’t a reptile. At first he was a mammal, a beast, so close in relationship to man that he could talk; so close that his seed could cross with the seed of a human. After Adam and Eve sinned, God changed the serpent into a reptile. In Genesis 3:15 God said to the serpent, *“I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed...”* Notice how the first enmity in the Bible was between Cain and his brother Abel. All you have to do is look at their natures to see which man was Adam’s seed and which man was the serpent’s seed. So in the very beginning the serpent added his genes to the human race and it was this mixing of genes that put a beastly nature into

mankind. That is why a person needs to be born again by the spirit of God. When we become Christians, God gives us a new nature because our old nature is flawed.³³³ Brother Ed, these things come by divine revelation. Just be sincere and pray about it; and I believe He will reveal it to you.”

They reached Bud Southwick’s cabin late the next afternoon. The following morning they packed their car and headed south. Bud followed them down to Fort St. John, got his brother and took him back to his cabin. The next morning, while Bud was down at the corrals feeding the horses, his brother fell into a seizure that sent him violently thrashing around the cabin’s wooden floor. Lela Southwick’s first instinct was to jump through the nearest window. Then she remembered what Bill had told her husband. Although she was a small woman, Lela straddled her brother-in-law and pulled at his shirt until the buttons popped. When she finally managed to pull the shirt off of him, she threw it in the fire, saying, “This I do in the name of Jesus Christ.” Immediately he stopped thrashing

³³³ Romans 6:6; 2 Corinthians 5:16; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:10

and kicking. A minute later he was sitting up talking to her, sweating, but otherwise perfectly normal.

Chapter 84

Wilderness Visions Fulfilled

1961

WILLIAM BRANHAM returned to Jeffersonville around the first of June, 1961. Usually his wilderness adventures refreshed him; but this year, his late spring hunting trip to northern British Columbia had sent him home feeling depressed. There were several reasons for his depression. After he spoke to the Chicago Ministerial Association, a tremendous spirit of

humility and love had filled his audience. Seventy ministers of the gospel had told him they were going to come to Jeffersonville and get baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Over a month had passed since that day and none of those ministers had come; nor had any of them called to tell him why. He could only assume they had changed their minds, perhaps under pressure from their supervisors.

The Chicago Ministerial Association was just part of the reason for his discouragement. Far more troubling were rumors he was hearing about people who believed he was actually Jesus Christ. He first encountered this problem the year before while fishing with some Christian men. They astonished him when they asked him if he was the Christ, the anointed Messiah. Of course he said no, and he warned them that they could ruin his ministry if they spread such a lie. He hoped that would end it, but rumors circulated about other people with the same idea. When he prayed about this problem, God directed him to Luke 3:15, which said “the people were in expectation; and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was

the Christ or not.” Bill saw the similarities. Still, these rumors bothered him because he didn’t know how to stop such a fallacy from spreading.

One night in Dawson Creek, Bill was talking to people after the service when a man came up to him and wanted to confess his sins. Bill didn’t understand what he meant, so the man took out his wallet and showed him a card that said, “William Branham is my Lord.” Aghast, Bill questioned the man until he was certain it wasn’t a joke. This incident upset him so much that he trembled for days. He kept thinking how tragic it would be if, after spending all of his adult life working for the honor and glory of Jesus Christ, he ended up being remembered as antichrist. He couldn’t stand the thought of such a horrible possibility. Wouldn’t it be better for him to die right now, rather than give this heresy time to spread? When he got to Bud Southwick’s cabin farther north, he considered having a “hunting accident.” Then he thought about his six-year-old son, and he changed his mind.

Now that he was home, his distress grew worse. He learned that two men who attended Branham

Tabernacle were saying the same thing as that deluded man in Dawson Creek. Think of it—two men from his own congregation who thought he was the Lord Jesus Christ! How could that be? Surely they had heard him preach that Jesus Christ was supreme deity. They were mistaking the messenger for the message; or more precisely, they were mistaking *a* son of man for *the* Son of man. Their folly cut into Bill’s heart more deeply than he could bear. Something drastic had to be done, even if it meant his leaving the ministry forever. He closed his office, put his house up for sale and canceled all his preaching engagements for the rest of the year. Then he told everyone to stay away and leave him alone.

For a week he trembled nervously and cried in such agony of spirit that he wondered if he was losing his mind. His only solace came on Friday, June 9, 1961, when God showed him a vision. He saw those two men from his church standing next to a pond, playing with a little yellow-and-black snake on the ground. Bill walked up to the men and warned them that the snake was poisonous. Suddenly the serpent lashed out

and struck him on the leg. Quickly he jumped back so he could examine his wound. Pulling up his pant leg to expose his skin, he saw blood oozing from two fresh fang marks next to a previous snakebite. At first he was worried. Then he noticed his blood was so thick that the poison wasn't affecting him. Picking up his rifle, he shot the snake in its mid-section, sending it into a frenzy of writhing contortions. With great difficulty Bill was trying to aim at the small, squirming head so he could finish it off.

One of the men said, "Don't use your gun; use that stick over there."

As Bill was reaching for the stick, the snake slithered into the water and disappeared among the pond reeds. Bill said, "Now these brothers will realize how dangerous that snake was; but it can't do much more harm because it's mortally wounded."

On Sunday morning he told this vision to his congregation. Then he said, "I have always wanted to be a true servant to Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Even though I've made mistakes, yet in my heart I love Him. I have always wanted my ministry to be

clean. But now a heresy has risen among you that is forcing me to leave the ministry. Some of you have taken me from my place as a brother or a minister, and are calling me Jesus Christ. Don't you realize that would brand me as antichrist? And I'll meet God as a quitter before I would meet Him as an antichrist! I have received letters and phone calls from different places, asking me if I believed that I was Christ. Brethren, that is a horrible, disgraceful, ungodly lie of the Devil! I am your brother!"

"Today I hope that error receives a deadly wound and will die out quickly so I can return to my ministry. Until then, I'm asking all of you to pray for me. If you've ever believed me to be a servant of Christ, remember: Thus saith the Lord, 'That thing is false.' It's wrong. Have nothing to do with it. I am your brother."

Monday morning these two men came to Bill's house and apologized. He felt relieved and somewhat comforted, at least enough to reopen his office and take his house off the market. But he did not

reschedule his preaching engagements, choosing rather to wait and see how the Lord would lead him.

A few weeks later, God showed him another vision. In this vision he was standing on the side of a mountain above the timberline, looking at a panorama of deep valleys and high peaks. He saw a large deer-like animal standing on a shale-covered slope. He wasn't sure what it was. It definitely wasn't a moose because moose have paneled antlers. This creature looked more like an elk or a caribou, except that it was chocolate brown in color. All the caribou he had ever seen were battleship gray in color. The antlers of this creature were also peculiar. Elk antlers branch off into many spikes all the way up the main stem. The antlers of caribou and reindeer have fewer branches, which usually begin high up on the main stem. Instead of spikes, caribou antlers are thicker at the tips, and some of the branches are filled in between tips, giving it a paneled look, especially noticeable in the forward-pointing brow tines. The animal in this vision had spike-tipped antlers like those of an elk, but branched like the antlers of a caribou. Bill had never seen

anything quite like it before. In the vision, he shot this dark brown animal at close range. Then, looking through his field glasses toward the tree line below him, he spotted a man wearing a green-and-beige checkered shirt, but the distance was too great to tell who it was. Making his way down the mountainside, he saw a huge silver-tipped grizzly. The bear attacked him and he killed it by shooting it through the heart with a small caliber rifle. Next the vision sprang back to the deer-like animal with unusual antlers. Bill saw a tape-measure laid along one antler of the trophy head, stretched from the base of the skull up the main stem to the top point of the antler. Then he saw two small hands reach out to hold the tape-measure in position. As the vision faded, he heard the angel of the Lord say, "*Those antlers will be 42 inches long, and that bear will be nine feet long.*"

A week later Miner Arganbright called and asked Bill if he would go with him to Alaska in August and help him organize two new chapters of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, one in Fairbanks and the other in Anchorage. Arganbright said he would pay all

Bill's expenses on the trip, and even offered to take him on a grizzly bear hunt after their business was done. It sounded like the perfect opportunity, considering his latest vision; but when he prayed about it, he felt checked. After two days, he called Miner Arganbright back and said the Holy Spirit would not let him go, at least not at this time.

LATER THAT SUMMER, William Branham preached three sermons on Daniel's encounter with the angel Gabriel (Daniel 9:20-27.) On Sunday morning, July 30, 1961, he preached, "Gabriel's Instructions to Daniel," and that night he preached, "The Six-fold Purpose of Gabriel's Visit." He followed these a week later with, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel," in which he showed how the things Gabriel told Daniel about the coming Messiah speak to us today about the second coming of Christ.

On August 25, 1961, Bill and Billy Paul went squirrel hunting with Banks and David Wood near Salem, Indiana. Before daybreak, Bill let his

companions off in one place, and then he drove farther along the road so he could hunt alone at one of his favorite spots... if he got to hunt at all, that is. So far it didn't look promising. The sky was a solid sheet of gray clouds, and a drizzling rain threatened to make the day miserable. Gradually the horizon grew lighter as dawn approached. He walked along a familiar path beside a pasture. Eventually the path took him into an L-shaped patch of woods, a place he had hunted often. He was walking west along the side of a hill and had just stepped over a log when the corner of his eyes caught what he at first thought was the glimmer of sunrise. On second thought he realized it couldn't be the sun because the glimmer came from the south. Looking to the south, he saw a ball of fire blazing in the air. That supernatural light he had seen many times, but what lay beneath it he had never seen before.

On top of the hill sat what looked like a huge bowl with two rainbows coming out of it. The rainbows were about thirty feet tall and stood side-by-side, forming a double arch, with one stem from each

rainbow disappearing into the bowl. Taking off his hat and setting down his rifle, Bill raised his hands and walked toward the phenomenon. Soon he could see it wasn't a double arch after all, but rather a triple arch. A third rainbow came out of the bowl at a 120-degree angle from the other two.

He stopped within thirty feet of the hilltop. The rainbows were growing, expanding, shimmering in the mist as if they were alive. Bill yelled, "O God, what would You have Your servant know?"

Like a rumble of thunder, a voice answered, "*Jehovah of the Old Testament is Jesus of the New Testament. He just changed His mask from Spirit to man. Remain faithful.*"

Feeling so numb he couldn't speak, yet at the same time feeling strangely satisfied, Bill took a few steps closer. All three rainbows shrank back into the bowl and the phenomenon disappeared, except for the Pillar of Fire, which lingered just long enough for Bill to notice it was in line with the spot where God had taught him the meaning of Mark 11:23.

Picking up his hat and gun, Bill made his way through the woods until 40 minutes later he came to that sycamore tree with its four main branches pointing north, south, east, and west. Climbing the trunk, he sat in the cradle of those four branches and thought, "Two years ago in this very spot God let me speak three squirrels into existence, showing me that Mark 11:23 is true: If you say to this mountain 'Be moved' and don't doubt, you can have what you say." Taking off his hat, he said, "Lord God, You are still the same Jesus. You are still God."

Soft as a misty rain, that voice filled the woods: "*How many squirrels do you need this time?*"

"Just like before; and I shall have this limit by ten o'clock today." Looking at his watch, he saw it was about six o'clock now. He slapped a mosquito that was biting him next to his eye. The mosquitoes were especially bad in this area and he had forgotten to bring mosquito repellent; so he added, "Besides this, the sun will shine within 30 minutes and not one mosquito will bother me the rest of the day."

Behind him a squirrel barked. Bill studied the woods until he spotted a red squirrel on a limb about 75 yards away. That was too far away to aim for its eye, so he lifted his scope slightly above its body and fired. The squirrel fell. When Bill walked over to get it, he wasn't surprised to find he had hit it in the eye, the same way he had shot that first created squirrel two years ago. Thirty minutes later the sun burnt away the clouds and at three minutes to ten he shot his third squirrel. He had not even heard the buzz of a mosquito in all that time.

Afterward, Bill taught, "Jehovah of the Old Testament is Jesus of the New Testament. See? He's the same God, just changing His form. The other day a Baptist minister said to me, 'How can you think that Jesus and God would be the same Person?' I said, 'Well, it's very easy if you just let your own thinking go and think in Bible terms. They are the self-same Being. God is a spirit; Jesus is the body that God was veiled in.' See? I said, 'Like in my home, I am a husband to my wife; a father to my daughter; and a grandfather to my grandson. So, I am husband, father,

and grandfather, all in one. My wife has no claim on me as her father or grandfather; she has a claim on me alone as her husband. And my daughter has no claim on me as her husband or grandfather; she is my child. Yet all three of these offices are in the same person. That is like God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are just a dispensational claim. God is the same; He just changes His form."

"In Philippians 2, Paul said, '*Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God... took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.*' The Greek phrase for describing this is *en morphe*, which means that He changed Himself, He changed His mask.³³⁴ See? Something can't be seen, then it's changed, and the eye can catch it. Like Elisha at Dothan. Elisha's servant couldn't see all those angels around the prophet, and God changed (not brought the angels down) but He changed their form so the servant could see them."³³⁵

³³⁴ Strong's Greek Lexicon describes "*morphe*" as "the form by which a person or thing strikes the vision; an adjustment of external appearance."

³³⁵ 2 Kings 6:1-17

“Here is another example of *en morphe*. When Shakespeare wrote his great drama *Macbeth*, he had one person play several parts. To do this an actor had to change his mask and costume during the play. Sometimes he came out as one character, and the next time he came out as another; but it was the same person each time. That’s like God. He changed Himself from a Pillar of Fire to become a man; then changed Himself from a man back to the Spirit again, that He might dwell in men: God acting in a man what He really was. Jesus Christ was God acting in a man.”

IN SEPTEMBER, 1961, William Branham returned to northern British Columbia for another try at hunting in the Canadian Rockies. He met Ed Byskal at Dawson Creek and together with Billy Paul they drove 400 miles north to Bud Southwick’s cabin. Bud was eager to tell Bill about his brother’s healing. “Brother Branham, he hasn’t had a seizure since the day my wife threw his shirt in the fire.”

“And he won’t ever have another one, as long as he believes it,” Bill said. “Now I’ll tell you about a vision I had in August.” He described the deer-like animal with antlers that were exactly 42 inches high, and he told them about seeing someone with a green-and-beige checkered shirt just before he shot a huge silver-tipped grizzly bear.

Bud Southwick rubbed his chin thoughtfully. “I doubt any of that will happen on this trip. For one thing, we’re not going into bear country; we’re going into sheep country, high above the timberline. And as far as that big deer goes, I’ve never seen an animal quite like the one you’re describing.”

“That doesn’t matter,” Bill said, “because God can do anything. Let me ask you brothers, do any of you have a green checkered shirt?”

“I don’t,” said Bud.

“I used to have one,” Ed Byskal said, “but it was worn out, so I threw it away.”

“Then it must be another hunting trip when I’ll shoot that bear. But it will happen; you just wait and see. It is ‘Thus saith the Lord.’”

It took them a couple of days to ride their horses into the high country and set up a base camp near the timberline. Early the next morning they hunted along the alpine slopes. Later that afternoon about six miles from camp they spotted a herd of mountain sheep, including three rams with horns that curled so far around they made a full circle. It was too late in the day to pursue the herd, so the hunters went back to camp with the idea that in the morning they would get an early start, return to the same spot and catch the rams sleeping.

Early the next morning Ed Byskal crawled out of his warm sleeping bag into the chilly air of his tent. Lighting his kerosene lantern, he rummaged through his duffle bag looking for the warmest clothes he could find. He was surprised to find his old green-and-beige checkered shirt folded at the bottom of his bag—surprised because he had told his wife to throw it away. Instead she had mended the big tear in its side and had packed it for this trip. Ed slipped it on, then put on his orange coat, zipped up the front and went outside to start the campfire and make breakfast. The

vision Bill had described four days ago was far from his thoughts.

By nine o'clock the hunters had hiked up to the ridge where the day before they had seen the rams and sheep. Today through their binoculars they spotted a bull caribou down in the timber. Ed and Blaine went after it, while Bill and Bud climbed higher up the ridge to look for that herd of sheep. After a while Bill heard a shot echo through the valley. He pulled out his binoculars and searched along the timberline until he saw the orange of Ed's coat. Ed Byskal was leaning over the carcass of a bull caribou.

Feeling contented, Bill leaned back against a rock outcropping so he could rest and admire the beautiful fall scenery. Below him stretched a wide, expansive valley speckled red, yellow and green with tamarack, aspen, fir, spruce, and pine trees. The colors near the timberline were mostly the blue-green of pygmy spruce and the red of buck-brush. Above the timberline the slopes were carpeted with yellow moss and blueberry bushes that grew only a few inches tall. Farther up, the slopes turned into shale slides below

majestic granite cliffs. Here and there, glaciers clung to the mountains like frozen tears. Scanning this panorama with his field glasses, Bill spotted a large animal just a few miles away. “Bud, what’s that over there?”

Bud squinted into his binoculars. “Brother Branham, that’s a caribou, but it sure looks different than any caribou I’ve ever seen before. Look at the points on that rack.”

“A caribou, huh? Well, that’s the animal I saw in a vision last month. Let’s go get him.”

“How are we going to get him? He’s nearly two miles around the side of that shale slope.”

“I don’t care if he’s twenty miles away. He’s mine. The Lord gave him to me.”

First they went down to the spot where Ed and Blaine were gutting and skinning Ed’s caribou. They arranged to have the younger men bring the packhorses along the timberline to a ravine below Bill’s intended target. Then Bill and Bud hiked back up the slope. Eventually their path leveled off and they picked their way along the loose shale slopes as

quietly as they could. By now they were hot enough to take off their coats. That singular caribou must have been sleeping in the warm September sunshine because Bill was able to work his way within 30 yards of it. One shot was all it took to kill the animal.

Bud scratched the stubble of whiskers on his chin. “You say these antlers are about 42 inches high?”

“Forty-two inches exactly.”

“I have a measuring tape in my saddle bag, so we’ll soon know. Now, what about that silver-tipped grizzly bear?”

“It’s around here somewhere. What puzzles me is this—where is that guy in the green checkered shirt?”

Bud lifted his field glasses to his eyes. “Well, I’ll be... Brother Bill, look.”

Through his binoculars Bill looked down the slope to the bottom of a ravine a few miles away where Ed and Blaine were waiting with the packhorses. Ed had taken off his coat, revealing the green-and-beige checkered shirt he had donned that morning. Bill said, “Everything is in place. Somewhere between here and

that green checkered shirt we'll see a silver-tipped grizzly."

Bud still had his binoculars up to his eyes, scanning the slopes and ridges. "I don't mean to doubt you, but I can see every inch of these slopes, and I don't see him."

"He's there somewhere. You'll see."

Tomorrow they would come back for the caribou's meat. Today the only thing they would pack out was its head, which Bill planned to stuff and keep as a trophy. Bill balanced the head on his shoulders and started down the mountain. Bud followed carrying both of their rifles. After a while they switched jobs. The caribou's head weighed over a hundred pounds, so it didn't take long to get tired while carrying it. They crossed a small glacier, and then stopped to drink ice water dripping from its base.

"What's that up there on the ridge?" Bill asked.

Bud focused his binoculars farther along the slope. "So help me, it's a silver-tipped grizzly."

Bill nodded. "That's him. Let's go get him."

"You're going to shoot him with that little rifle?" asked Bud skeptically, pointing at Bill's Remington model 721 with its small .270 inch bore. "Maybe you should use mine."

"This is what I used in the vision, and in the vision I dropped him with one shot."

"I know you've shot bears before, but those black bears are nothing compared to these grizzlies. When you shoot a grizzly, he doesn't go into shock like most animals; he just keeps coming. You'd better shoot this one in the chest. That way if you miss his heart, you could still break his back."

The bear was about two miles away. As they stalked nearer, the two hunters dropped into a ravine that hid them for most of the remaining distance. When they came out of the ravine, there lay the grizzly a hundred yards or so up the slope, watching them alertly. It looked like a brown haystack. Its fur was dark brown close to its body, but the ends of the hairs were silvery-white; hence the name silver-tipped. Bill aimed for its chest and fired. With a ferocious roar the grizzly charged, crashing down the slope like an army tank,

jaws open, lips peeled back in a snarl, teeth poised to bite and tear. Before Bill had time to bolt another shell in the chamber, the grizzly collapsed scarcely 20 yards away.

All the sunburn had drained from Bud's face. He sighed with relief and muttered, "I didn't want him in my lap."

They gutted and skinned the bear, but of course there was no way they could carry the skin by themselves. Just the bear's skin alone weighed 300 pounds. They would have to bring a packhorse up later and get it. Walking back to the spot where they left the caribou head, they picked it up and carried it down the mountain to the place where Ed and Blaine were waiting for them with the packhorses.

Eagerly Bill told them about his two kills. Then he said, "Brother Ed, you told me you didn't have a green checkered shirt."

"I'm sorry I told you something wrong, Brother Branham. My wife packed it and I didn't know it was there."

Getting his measuring tape out of his saddlebag, Bud knelt beside the caribou's head. He ran the tape up one antler from the base of the skull to the tip of the main beam, but because of the way the antler curved, the tape kept slipping off. The second time he tried, Blaine reached down with both hands and held the tape in the middle. Bill elbowed Ed in the ribs, whispering, "See, there are those two small hands I saw in the vision." With the tape in place, everyone leaned over to see the results. The tip of the antler reached exactly to the 42-inch mark on the tape.

WILLIAM BRANHAM considered this hunting trip as the highpoint of his year. The consideration God showed him in the mountains of British Columbia became a source of comfort to him during the sad months ahead. Not long after he returned to Jeffersonville, his mother got sick. When Bill stopped by his mother's house to check on her, Ella Branham said, "Billy, I'm going home to see your dad." Charles

Branham died in 1936, so by now Ella had been a widow for 25 years.

“Mom, don’t talk like that. You’re not quite 70 years old. You should have lots of years left.”

He prayed for her, but the Lord didn’t show him a vision to relieve his concern. Several weeks passed and her condition worsened. Bill had several more trips planned for that fall, but he canceled them so he could stay close to home in case his mother needed him. Then, one Wednesday afternoon she had to go to the hospital. Her doctor couldn’t figure out what was wrong with her, so Bill continued to pray for her healing. On Saturday when he visited her in the hospital, he found his mother out of her bed, standing by the window, looking up at the clouds. Without turning around, she said, “Billy, I see you.”

“Sure, mama; I’m right here.”

Her eyes remained fixed on the clouds and her voice sounded dreamy. “You’re old, Billy—so very old. Your hair is white, and your beard is so long. You’ve got one arm around the cross and your other arm is reaching for me.”

Bill thought about the day, not long after he himself became a Christian, when he baptized his mother in the name of Jesus Christ. “Mama,” He asked, “what does Jesus mean to you now?”

“He means more than life to me, Billy.”

Ella’s mystic vision convinced Bill that she really was dying. By the next Tuesday, she was close to her last breath. Those of her children who lived near Jeffersonville gathered at the hospital to be with her that day. Bill sat by her bed and held her hand for several hours. Sometimes he talked and sometimes she answered him, but eventually her energy dropped so low she couldn’t talk. Bill noticed that she still had enough energy to blink, so he said, “Mama, now that you’re dying, I want to ask you one last question. Is Jesus just as sweet to you now as He was when you received Him in the form of the Holy Spirit? If He is, then bat your eyes real fast.”

She blinked so fast and long that tears streamed from the corners of her eyes. Moments later Ella Branham stepped into a higher dimension. Weeping inside, Bill thought about how hard life had been for his mother

when she was young and so poor, struggling to raise her ten children in the years up to and through the Great Depression. Her long struggle was over now. A new and happy day stretched endlessly before her.

He told his brothers and his sister, “Now that mother’s gone, the family won’t be the same. She was our hitching post. I doubt we’ll get together as much as we used to.”

Funeral arrangements and family discussions occupied him the rest of the day. When he finally got home that night, the weight of her loss still felt crushing. Sitting in his den, he picked up a new Bible that a woman in Chicago had sent him as a gift. This King James edition had all the words of Jesus printed in red. Bill prayed, “Heavenly Father, will You give me some comfort from Your Word?” Opening this Bible at random, he immediately saw his answer in bright red letters: “*Weep not. She is not dead, but sleepeth.*”³³⁶

Those words helped him fall asleep. The next morning he woke around 8 o’clock and wandered into

the kitchen, where Meda was cooking breakfast. Rebekah and Joseph were already sitting at the table. Sarah soon joined them. They ate somberly.

“Where is grandma now?” Joe asked.

How do you explain death to a six-year-old boy? “Her body is down at the funeral parlor,” Bill explained, “but her soul has gone upstairs to heaven.”

“Will she come back downstairs tonight? I miss her.”

“No, Joseph, I don’t know when she’ll come back. When Jesus comes back, she’ll come back with Him.”

Bill left the kitchen table and walked into his living room. Suddenly his living room wasn’t there; in fact his whole house wasn’t there. He seemed to be standing in the air at the back of a huge outdoor amphitheater. A large crowd of people sat in semi-circular rows that sloped down to a central stage. In front of the stage the first three rows of seats had been removed, making room for a hundred crippled and disabled children who seemed to be waiting their turn for prayer. Bill could see a man in a dark suit standing behind a podium on the stage, leading the crowd in singing Christian hymns. That song leader looked

³³⁶ Luke 8:52

oddly familiar. In a split second Bill's perspective changed and now he was the man on the stage leading the congregation in singing. As the hymn ended, he noticed a lady enter at the back of the amphitheater and walk down the aisle toward the stage. He assumed she was a celebrity, because people stood and acknowledged her as she passed. Her outfit looked like the style women used to wear around the beginning of the twentieth century. She wore a full white skirt and a white blouse with puffy sleeves and a high-buttoned collar. Her leather shoes were laced all the way up to her ankles and her long hair was gathered and pinned beneath a fancy wide-brimmed hat.

Bill decided to lead everyone in a Sunday school chorus, which would give this celebrity time to sit down before he began his sermon. He sang, "Bring them in; bring them in; bring them in from the fields of sin. Bring them in; bring them in; bring the little ones to Jesus." Reaching the front, this illustrious lady walked up on stage and stood to one side of the podium. Spontaneously, the audience applauded. Bill turned to greet her. She had her head bowed enough so

that the brim of her hat momentarily hid her face. When she lifted her head, Bill was surprised to see his mother looking at him from the beauty of her youth.

"Mama?" He asked.

Ella smiled and nodded. "Yes, Billy."

Before he could say another word, the amphitheater shook from the simultaneous discharge of lightning and thunder. At the end of that thunder, he heard a voice say, "*Do not worry about your mother. She is now like she was in 1906.*"

"1906?" Bill echoed, as he was crossing back to the natural world.

Meda, who was standing just inside the kitchen doorway, asked, "What's the matter with you, Bill?"

"Honey, I just saw a vision of mama standing right here. I've got to find out what happened in 1906."

Later that day he opened his mother's Bible to the flyleaf where she had recorded important family dates. He found the year when Ella Harvey had married Charles Branham. That explained the riddle. In 1906 his mother was his father's bride. She was very young, but that was not uncommon in rural Kentucky during

that period of American history. Now she was another kind of bride, part of a collective bride—the Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ. Bill knew he would see her again in a better place.

By now, November had once again chilled the landscape of Indiana, although it had not yet snowed. Since Bill had canceled all his campaigns through the end of the year, he decided that next month he would fast and pray about what course his ministry should take in 1962. Sometime around 3 o'clock Tuesday morning, November 21, 1961, he got out of bed, walked into his living room, turned on a light, and knelt to pray beside a chair. After a few minutes he felt his body moving. Opening his eyes, he was surprised to find himself walking on top of a giant map of the Middle East. He seemed to be walking west toward a thin strip of blue that crossed his path in the distance. In the background he heard someone singing, "I'm going down to the Jordan River." When he had covered about two-thirds of the distance to that blue strip of ink on the map, he said, "Praise God, on the

other side of that river is Palestine, the Promised Land, where every promise abides."

Abruptly he was back in his living room, still kneeling in prayer beside his chair. "Could I have fallen asleep and dreamed that?" He thought. "After all, it is night time." As if God was answering that question, he felt his body moving again, rising from the floor until it left the room. This time the vision set him down on a straight, narrow highway that ran through grassy lowlands. He was walking beside a Christian brother whom he did not know. Other people were also walking along this highway and everybody seemed to be afraid of something. Bill said, "Now I'm sure this is a vision and the Lord God is here. But what is everyone afraid of?"

A deep, resonant voice said, "*There is great danger in these days. There is a hideous serpent that kills when it strikes you.*"

Just then he heard something approaching through the tall grass. He stopped to watch, and soon he saw a huge black snake slither onto the highway in front of him. Bill recognized it as the African mamba, one of

the deadliest snakes in the world. Mambas are fast and aggressive snakes, with a habit of raising their bodies partway off the ground and striking their prey high in the body or head. Their venom is so potent that a high percentage of people who are bitten by mambas die, unless they receive antivenin treatment soon after the bite. Consequently, African natives are deathly afraid of mambas. One time while he was hunting in Africa, he heard a porter yell, "Mamba!" Bill saw those natives drop their packs and even run into one another in their haste to get away from that spot.

In this vision, the mamba glared at him with evil intent, its tongue darting in and out of its mouth. The Christian brother, who had stopped beside him, now backed away, leaving Bill to face this deadly threat alone. The mamba attacked. It moved quickly at first, but as it slithered forward, it moved slower and slower until something stopped it a few feet away from him. Its mouth opened and its fangs quivered, but as hard as it tried, it couldn't bite him. So it slithered around and attacked him from the other side. The same thing happened. It came within a few feet of him, and then

something mysteriously kept it from coming any closer. Finally it gave up and changed victims, attacking Bill's friend instead. The anonymous brother leaped aside, barely escaping. Again and again the mamba struck at the man, who continued to jump evasively.

Bill thought, "No wonder everybody on this highway is so scared." Throwing his hands up in the air, he prayed, "O God, have mercy on my brother. If that serpent bites him, it will kill him." As soon as he said this, the mamba again threatened to strike at Bill. From somewhere above him, that voice said, "*Be of good courage. You have been given the power to bind it.*"

"Well, God, what must I do?"

"To do this, you must be more sincere."

The mamba was slithering toward him again.

"God, forgive me for my insincerity and help me to be more sincere." Suddenly an anointing flowed through him that charged his body with power he could feel. Pointing at the mamba, he said, "Satan, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I bind you."

Instantly the snake twisted into an ampersand (&)—that figure-eight-like symbol used in place of the word “and.” Then the snake wrapped its tail around its own throat & choked itself to death. A puff of blue smoke came out of its mouth. Now the rigid carcass looked as harmless as a pretzel.

The voice above him said, “*You can unbind him also.*”

“Then Satan, so that I might know, I unbind you.”

The snake opened its mouth and sucked blue smoke back into its lungs. Its scales softened & it wiggled, starting to unravel its body. Quickly Bill said, “I bind you back in the name of Jesus Christ.”

Smoke flew out of its mouth again & the mamba twisted into that ampersand-shape, choking itself until it was rigid.

He heard the alarm clock ringing back in his bedroom. Soon he heard Meda walk down the hall and tell Sarah and Becky it was time to get up. The house filled with the typical noises of children preparing for school. Bill retreated to his den to think about this vision. The mamba seemed to represent sin at its

worst. The power to bind Satan was available. What else could it mean? Bill prayed, “Heavenly Father, before Your spirit leaves me and I have to take my children to school, will You explain what You’re trying to tell me in this vision by showing me something in Your Word?”

When he opened his Bible, his thumb pressed the page directly under 1 Corinthians 5:8, “*Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*” Now he understood. He was planning to fast and pray about his future. Spiritually speaking, a fast in the body is a feast with the Lord.³³⁷ God was telling him that during this fast, he must be more sincere than he had ever been before. That meant he was approaching something momentous. Walking toward that river on the map reminded him of how Joshua led the Israelites up to the Jordan River and then gazed across the river at the Promised Land, where he was supposed to divide and distribute an inheritance for God’s people.

³³⁷ Perhaps he gets this from 2 Corinthians 5:6-9

At that time the Lord said to Joshua, “*This day I will begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.*”³³⁸ Bill could never forget that day when a disembodied hand appeared in his room, split open the pages of his Bible and pointed to the first nine verses of Joshua. How could he forget it? He had written that vision in the flyleaf of his Scofield Study Bible—the same Bible he still used constantly at home and when he traveled. Ever since that day in 1952, he had known that his ministry would somehow parallel the ministry of Joshua.

The next morning, Wednesday, November 22, 1961, Bill woke before his alarm clock went off. Something was chattering at him from the corner of his bedroom. Rolling over, he was startled to see a hideous demon standing in the corner. It looked something like a Neanderthal man with horns protruding from its head, and it was cackling like a chicken that had just laid an egg. Instead of frightening him, it amused him. The demon sort of looked like Alley Oop, that cave man

character he saw in the comic section of the newspaper. “Meda,” He said, reaching over and putting a hand on her shoulder. “Meda, honey, look at that.” He decided not to wake her, thinking, “That would scare her to death.”

The longer he listened to the demon’s chatter, the more he could make out words. It was definitely talking to him, accusing him, saying things like, “You don’t have any power with God. You’re just a bluff. You have no power at all.”

Bill said, “Satan, you’re an offense to me. Get out of my way in the name of Jesus Christ.” Like dirty water spiraling down the drain of a sink, this demon swirled into a fluid mist and vanished. Bill settled back on his pillow, enjoying the sudden quiet. Then he felt a peculiar sweetness surround him, filling his cup of joy until it overflowed. “I wonder if the Holy Spirit is close to me now?” He thought.

From the opposite corner of his bedroom, the sweetest voice he had ever heard, said, “*Don’t fear to do anything or go anywhere or say anything, for the*

³³⁸ Joshua 3:7

never-failing presence of Jesus Christ is with you wherever you go.”

That morning, after he took his children to school, he bundled himself in his warmest winter clothes, drove to the Tunnel Mill wilderness area and hiked to his cave. Regardless of the cold weather, he had to fast and pray. Something momentous was approaching. He could feel it in his joints, his nerves, and his spirit.

Chapter 85

His Rifle Explodes

1962

IN JANUARY OF 1962 Miner Arganbright called William Branham and asked if he would consider

going to Switzerland again sometime. When Bill said he would consider it, Arganbright immediately phoned the Full Gospel Business Men’s chapter in Switzerland, asking for a volunteer to arrange some meetings in that country. Meanwhile Bill traveled into the American southwest, spending the last half of January preaching in Phoenix and Tempe, Arizona. He returned to Jeffersonville in February and organized a fishing trip with Welch Evans, Fred Sothmann, and Banks Wood. Welch Evans was driving the group in his car. Bill sat in the front passenger seat while they drove across Kentucky. Their destination was the reservoir behind Wolf Creek Dam, which was open for public fishing year-round. Sometime along the way Bill had a dream or a vision, at first he was not sure which. The images he recalled were so vivid that he thought it might be a vision. Then again, he might have dozed off and dreamed. All he knew for sure was, one second he was listening to his friends talking in the car, and the next second he was standing on a wooden dock gazing out across a grayish-green ocean.

Miner Arganbright stood beside him and said, “I have prepared a boat for you, Brother Branham,” and he pointed to a small, white canoe tied to a pillar on one side of the dock.

“No,” said Bill. “That isn’t sufficient.”

“It will go 40 miles per hour in the shallow water near the shore,” Miner argued.

“But it won’t take me across the deep water. For that I’ll need a big ship with a big engine.”

Miner shrugged. “Well, your friends are planning to cross the ocean in a canoe. They tell me they’re going to follow you wherever you go. Maybe you could just ride with them.” Here Miner pointed to the other side of the dock where Fred Sothmann and Banks Wood sat in a green canoe tied to a pylon. Their canoe was packed with camping gear. Arganbright asked them, “Are you boatmen?”

“Yes,” they replied.

Bill said, “They are not. I know more about boats than they do and I wouldn’t take a little boat like that out in deep water. If the wind comes up, a big wave will swamp them.”

Now Arganbright took Bill’s arm and led him away from the dock, saying, “Brother Branham, they love you and believe in you. If you cross this ocean in a ship, they’ll try to follow you in that canoe and they’ll capsize and drown. But there is a way to keep them here. See that building over there? That is the only storehouse in this whole country. If you will stock it with plenty of food, they will stay here while you are gone.”

The next thing Bill knew, he was stocking the storehouse shelves with boxes of carrots, potatoes, cabbages and other fresh vegetables. When the shelves were full, he called his wife on the telephone and asked her if she wanted to sail with him across the ocean. As the vision ended, Meda said she didn’t want to go at this time.

Bill told his fishing buddies what he had just seen, adding, “Those meetings Brother Arganbright is arranging for me in Switzerland, something will happen and I won’t go. The brethren in Switzerland are going to try to use me for their advantage, but God won’t allow it to happen.”

Later in the afternoon they reached the house of the friend where they would be staying. That night Bill got a telephone call from Miner Arganbright. Miner said, “My counterpart in Switzerland has scheduled a five-day Full Gospel Business Men’s convention in Zurich for the middle of March. Brother Branham, come on over with me, and bring your wife with you, because you won’t have to preach very much. I think they only have you scheduled to preach one night. After the convention, I’ll take you and your wife on a tour through Europe and down into Palestine.”

Bill told his friend he would discuss it with Meda and then call him back with an answer (even though he already knew what that answer would be.) The next morning he called his wife and explained Miner’s plan. Because their children were still in school, Meda said March was not a good time for her to travel around Europe. Politely she said she didn’t want to go.

Now that the scene of the vision was fulfilled literally, Bill felt he could explain its meaning to his friends. He said the little white canoe represented a single meeting. The white color meant good. It meant

it was all right for him to go anywhere along the shores of America for one meeting, but God didn’t want him to cross the ocean for just one meeting. The two brothers in the green canoe represented Arganbright’s offer to take Bill on a tour of Europe and Palestine. Brother Wood and Brother Sothmann were not preachers; but Bill was a preacher. The storehouse was his church in Jeffersonville where he could preach anything and everything on his heart; where his tape-recorded sermons would not only feed his flock for a day, but feed his people for as long as they wanted to eat.

So, instead of going overseas that spring, Bill stayed close to home and preached over a dozen sermons in Branham Tabernacle that he felt would help Christians grow closer to God. He preached: “Oneness with God,” “Perseverance,” “The Greatest Battle Ever Fought,” “Expressions,” “The Spoken Word is the Original Seed,” “Wisdom Versus Faith,” “Restoration of the Bride Tree,” “Possessing All Things,” “The Way of A True Prophet,” “Letting Off the Pressure,”

“Questions and Answers,” “Taking Sides With Jesus,” and “The End-Time Evangelism.”

In “The Greatest Battle Ever Fought,” (delivered on March 11, 1962,) he pointed out that the first battle ever fought began in heaven when the archangel Michael and his companion angels fought against the archangel Lucifer and his angels. Lucifer’s army was thrown out of heaven, so they came to earth and continued the war. On earth Lucifer chose the human mind as his battleground. Lucifer chose for his weapon “doubt in the form of reasoning away God’s Word.” God, on the other hand, chose “faith in His Word” as His weapon. Every human being has the same choice as Adam and Eve: he or she must either believe God’s Word and live, or doubt it and die. So the greatest battle ever fought is still going on in the minds of men and women everywhere.

“I am not talking about the Christian Science idea of ‘mind over matter,’” Bill said to clarify this point. “When your mind accepts the life within the Word of God, that act of acceptance will bring God’s life into you. It is not just your thought that does it; rather it’s

the Word of God brought into you through the channel of your thoughts. See? Your mind accepts it and grasps it. Your spirit controls your mind. When your spirit catches the Word of God, the spirit in that Word brings life into you.”

On March 18, 1962 he preached “The Spoken Word is the Original Seed,” a six-hour teaching message split into two parts so his audience could break for lunch. In the morning he said, “I believe my mission on earth is to forerun the coming Word, which is Christ. He has in Himself the Millennium and every other good thing, because He is the Word.” Then he read Genesis 1:11: “*And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.*”

Bill said, “Every spoken word of God is a seed.” To back up this statement, he read Luke 8, where Jesus told a parable about a farmer planting his crop. When His disciples asked Him what the parable meant, Jesus said, “*Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God.*”

Expanding on this theme, Bill said, “His Word is His seed and His spirit is the water. If the spirit of God comes forth to water the seed, it will produce the life of the seed.

“I believe the Bible is the Word, the whole truth; and Jesus is the Word made manifest. He and His Word are one and the same. What was he? He was that seed that Eve should have produced, but she hybridized it by disbelieving God’s Word. The Holy Spirit was in the Garden of Eden to water that seed. Man wasn’t made to die; he was made to live. Hybridization brought death. Eve crossbred the human race through the serpent (who at that time was not a reptile, but a mammal genetically similar to a man). Now all of us are hybrid from the original. That is the reason you are constantly dying.

“The reason God manifested Himself so perfectly in Jesus is because Jesus was the Seed-Word, the germ of life itself. The germ of the seed has the life in it. Jesus was the Germ-Word of God. The germ is watered by the Spirit. Jesus had to be broken open there at Calvary in order for that seed to let forth its life to

reproduce other seeds. They are going to see that Word and stay right with it. He sent forth His spirit to water those seeds, and that will produce a people who will not deny anything in the Word, because they are a kindred seed with the original seed.

“The first Adam was supposed to have a son that would continue on the human race. Eve crossbred with the serpent and brought forth a hybrid, and a generation of bastard children born to die. Then Jesus came and was that correct seed. He proved it. Everything that Adam lost, Jesus was. See it? He is the correct son. Eve would have finally brought that child forth if she hadn’t listened to the serpent and produced a hybrid son. That is the reason I believe what I believe. It has got to come back to this Word.

“All of God’s sons must be the same. Yes, sir. When we are born of the Word and the Spirit, it brings us back to the spoken Word again, just like Jesus said in John 3. Then it brings us back to the place where we should have been at the beginning. That is the reason Christ died: to bring us back to the place where we are sons of God.”

After lunch, Bill continued this theme. He taught that when Adam came to Eve, he found her womb already impregnated with the serpent's seed. But before Eve could do the act, she first had to receive the devil's lie in the womb of her mind. She disbelieved just one word of God, but it was a key word. God said, "Don't eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden or you will die." Satan reasoned with her through the mouth of the serpent, saying, "You will NOT die; you will become wise."³³⁹ By adding that one word, Satan changed everything. By disbelieving God's Word, Eve lost her virginity and the human race acquired its sinful nature.

Now compare Eve with Mary. Eve received the wrong word, which produced the wrong seed. Mary was chosen to receive the correct seed. But first Mary also had to face Satan, who tried to reason her away from the Word. When the angel came to Mary and told her she would bring forth a son, Mary said, "*How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?*" Satan was right there whispering in her ear, sowing seeds of doubt, saying that such a promise was impossible due

to her current circumstances. By the rules of logic, Satan had a good argument. But when the angel explained, "*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,*" right away Mary answered him, "*Be it unto me according to thy word.*"³⁴⁰ Thus the Scripture was fulfilled: "*The Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.*"³⁴¹

Jesus was a spoken-word child. He wasn't conceived through a sexual act, but through God's spoken Word. (Inside Mary's womb God created both the egg and the sperm that fertilized that egg, so genetically He was fully human, but His parentage was strictly divine.) Since He didn't come through sex, Jesus didn't have to die; but He did die in order to pay the debt for Adam's sin. That's the only way it could have been paid. Nobody else could do it, because everyone else was sexually born. Like Mary, those people who

³³⁹ Genesis 3

³⁴⁰ Luke 1:26-38

³⁴¹ Isaiah 7:14

are predestinated to be part of the collective Bride of Jesus Christ will first receive the Word in the womb of their minds.

Although Bill had preached thousands of sermons in his lifetime, he had done very little writing. However, a few days before he preached this sermon, the Holy Spirit told him to pick up his pen and write a message for the church, which he now read:

“Here is what I am trying to say to you. The law of reproduction is that each species brings forth after its own kind, according to Genesis 1:11. Consequently, the children of God will be like their Father. In these last days the true church (the Bride) will come to the headstone, and she will become a super church, a super race, as she nears Him. They in the Bride will be so much like Him that they will even be in His very image. This is in order to be united with Him. They will be one. They will be the very manifestation of the Word of the living God. Denominations can't produce this.

Denominations will produce their creeds and their dogmas, mixed with the Word. That will make a hybrid product.

“The first son, Adam, was the spoken word of God (a seed). He was given a bride in order to reproduce another son of God. But Eve fell by hybridization and therefore she caused Adam to die.

“The second Son, Jesus, who was also the spoken word of God (seed), was also given a Bride like Adam was. But before Jesus could marry His Bride, she also fell. She, like Adam's wife, was put to the test whether she would believe the Word of God and live, or doubt the Word and die. When she doubted and left the Word, she died.

“From a little group of the true seed of the Word, God will present Christ with a beloved Bride. She will be a virgin of His Word because she knows no man-made creeds or dogmas. Through the members of this Bride

God will fulfill all that He promised would be made manifest in the virgin.

“The Word of promise came to the virgin, Mary. In Isaiah 9:6 God promised that He would manifest Himself someday. Now He acted to fulfill His own Word of promise in the virgin. Notice how it was an angel who brought her the message, but that angel’s message was still the Word of God. When she accepted the angel’s message to her, God fulfilled all that He promised would happen at that time. Mary’s natural womb types the spiritual womb of the virgin Bride today. Just like Mary did, this end-time virgin will say, ‘Be it unto me according to thy Word.’ Christ is the head of this Bride and they are subject to Him in everything. Not only will they love Him, they will have His potential.

“Notice the harmony of the Father and the Son. Jesus never did anything until first the Father showed Him what to do (John 5:19.) This harmony will exist between Jesus and

His Bride. He shows her His Word of life and she receives it. She never doubts it. Nothing can harm her, not even death, for even if that seed is planted in the ground, the water of the Spirit will raise it up again. Here is the secret of this. The Word is in the Bride like it was in Mary. The Bride has the mind of Christ and therefore she knows what He wants done with His Word. She does it in the name of the Lord, which means she has ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ Then the Word germinates by the water of the Spirit, and it grows until it fulfills its purpose.

“Those in the Bride do only His will. No one can make them do otherwise. They have ‘Thus saith the Lord’ or they keep still. They know that it has to be God in them doing the works, fulfilling His own Word. He did not complete all His work while in His earthly ministry, so now He works in and through His Bride. She knows that. Christ will now fulfill

through His Bride that work which He left for this specific time.

“So let us stand like Joshua and Caleb. Our Promise Land is coming in sight even as theirs did. The name Joshua means ‘Jehovah Savior.’ The man Joshua represents the end-time leader who will come to the church even as Paul came as the original leader to the early Gentile church. Caleb represents those people who will follow Joshua...”

This essay continued for several more pages, showing how the lives of Moses and Elijah teach us many things about today. Bill said, “Christ is now taking Himself a Bride to be impregnated with His own Seed-Word in the spiritual womb of her mind. He doesn’t want any creeds or dogmas mixed with it. His Bride must be a virgin to Him.”

“Oh, people, God bless you. Hear me. I can’t believe anything except God’s Word. I want His Word to be my life, everything that I am. I want you to do the same. Let your walks, your talks, your moves, and

everything else you do, be in the Word of God. Let the mind of Christ come into you, and impregnate you with the Word. If you let the mind of a denomination come in, you’ll be denominationally impregnated. If you let the mind of Christ come into you, He can’t deny His own Word, because He is God. You’ll be impregnated with the Word and believe it. I don’t care if they kick you out and every door is closed, you’ll stand just the same. Amen.”

WHEN WILLIAM BRANHAM visited Africa in 1951, he first shot a Weatherby .257 Magnum rifle. He loved it. He said it was his “dream rifle,” and yet he never bought one. He already owned a dozen guns. In his mind he couldn’t justify spending \$300 for another rifle when he knew that some missionaries in Africa didn’t have shoes.³⁴² Over the years several different men offered to buy a Weatherby Magnum for him, but he always said no.

³⁴² At this time William Branham was living on a salary of \$400 per month that he received from Branham Tabernacle.

In the spring of 1962, a man named Rodney Armstrong became a Christian and started going to church at Branham Tabernacle. Armstrong was the Indiana distributor for the Weatherby Company. When he learned that Bill wanted a Weatherby .257 Magnum, but couldn't justify the high cost, Armstrong suggested an alternative. He had received a bulletin from the Weatherby Company stating that the shell chamber of any .257 caliber rifle could be re-bored so it would accept a Magnum cartridge, giving it the same ballistic characteristics as the Weatherby Magnum. The company had tested this procedure and guaranteed the results. Normally this would have cost \$40, but because Armstrong was a dealer, he could get it done for about \$15.

The idea pleased Bill immensely. He already owned a .257 caliber rifle that he rarely shot. It was a bolt-action Winchester Model 70. A friend in California had given this rifle to his son Billy Paul as a present, not knowing that Billy Paul was left-handed. Because Billy Paul had trouble working the right-handed bolt-action with his left hand, Bill had traded his lever-

action .300 Savage rifle for his son's new .257 caliber. Now Bill was eager to convert this Winchester Model 70 into the equivalent of his dream rifle—a Weatherby Magnum.

Caliber refers to the diameter of a gun barrel's bore. A caliber of .257 means that the diameter of the hole in the barrel is two hundred and fifty-seven thousandths of an inch across. When the Weatherby factory worked on Bill's rifle, they did not change the diameter of the barrel, just the length and diameter of the barrel's shell chamber so it could accept a .257 Magnum cartridge. A magnum cartridge is larger than a normal cartridge, so it can hold more gunpowder. The result is a faster bullet with a flatter trajectory, improving a gun's inherent accuracy.

On April 22, 1962, Bill preached a sermon he called, "The Restoration of the Bride Tree." A week later—during the first week in May—his converted rifle came back from Roy Weatherby's California factory. Eager to try it out, Bill asked Banks Wood to drive him out to the Conservation Club's shooting range. Once there, he tacked a black-and-white bull's-eye

target to the wooden backstop 50 yards down range. Then he walked back to the firing line, sat on a bench and rested the stock of his new rifle on a wooden gun rest placed there for that purpose. He fired several rounds. Banks Wood checked the results and hollered that they all hit the bull's-eye. Banks stepped back out of the way, and Bill worked the bolt-action up and forward, sliding another magnum shell into the chamber. If he had not been so excited, he might have heeded a warning sign. The primers in his ejected casings were pushed back out a little bit from their seats. He noticed this detail, but at the time he was having so much fun, he didn't think about what it meant. Of course a primer should remain flush with the closed end of the brass casing. The fact that these primers came back out a ways meant that somehow when each shell fired, the explosion was creating back pressure.

Bill leveled his rifle, snuggled his eye against the scope and centered the crosshairs on the bull's-eye. As always, he squeezed the trigger. There followed an explosion far beyond what he had expected. For a

brief moment he saw flames shoot five feet in the air, and then he couldn't see or hear anything. Dazed, he felt himself rising like a hot air balloon. Where was he? What had happened? Was he dead? A few seconds passed before he realized he was still alive and still standing on solid ground. Surprisingly, his hands felt empty. Where was his rifle? He could feel blood dripping from somewhere around his right eye. Putting one hand over his bleeding eye, he used his other hand to force his left eye open. He saw pieces of his rifle scattered all over the place. It had literally exploded in his grasp. The barrel had flown forwards, the bolt had flown backwards, and the wooden stock and the trigger mechanism had disintegrated into pieces of shrapnel flying in every direction. He realized that shrapnel had probably peppered his face, causing all this blood. In his heart he prayed, "Lord Jesus, You are my healer. Please stop this bleeding." After a few more seconds the blood stopped oozing from around his eye.

Banks Wood, who was still down range, had not yet seen the accident. Bill tried to yell, but he couldn't, so he waved one arm until he got Banks' attention. Banks

ran to him, and gasped, seeing blood all over his friend's face. Grabbing Bill's hand, Banks guided him to the car, and then, in his haste, flooded the carburetor with too much gas so that the engine wouldn't start.

Fortunately he soon got his car started and drove Bill home. Bill washed his face and assessed his injuries as best he could. His face looked terrible. Banks called an eye specialist, who agreed to see Bill right away.

The ophthalmologist used his special magnifying scope to look deeply into Bill's eyeballs. As far as he could tell, Bill's eyes weren't damaged. The rest of his face was a different story. The explosion had imbedded fifteen tiny fragments of metal in a half-moon pattern below Bill's right eye. Several larger pieces had peppered his forehead and cheek. One small fragment even pierced his lip and chipped one of his teeth. The doctor extracted all of the larger pieces that were in Bill's cheek and forehead, but he said the fragments around his eye could not be removed safely. "They shouldn't bother you though," he added. "Mr. Branham, look at it this way—your eye was only one inch away from that explosion... and yet, not one

fragment touched your eyeball. That's a miracle. With an explosion like that, you're lucky it didn't blow your head clean off your shoulders. The angel of the Lord must have protected you somehow."

At first the skin on the right side of Bill's face looked like raw hamburger; but after a few days his skin healed. For more than a week he heard a ringing sound constantly, but eventually that stopped. The deeper scars would take several months to heal.

Returning to the shooting range, he recovered the barrel, the bolt and as many other pieces as he could find, and sent them back to the Weatherby factory for analysis. It turned out that when they had reconfigured the shell chamber, they made the headspace a fraction too big. The headspace in a rifle chamber is the gap between the bullet-end of the cartridge and the beginning of the spiral grooves that make up the barrel's rifling. This gap must be machined to a precise tolerance, typically between two and five thousandths of an inch. If this gap is too big, the expanding gas cannot be properly controlled. That is what happened to Bill's rifle. Fundamentally, when he pulled the

trigger, his rifle became a pipe-bomb. Since the bolting mechanism was weaker than the steel barrel, the explosion went backwards instead of forwards.

Bill told his congregation, “Satan was trying to kill me there, but he can’t do it until God is finished with me and wants me to come home. So I know there is something more God wants me to do.”

BY JUNE OF 1962 Bill felt recovered enough from his accident to embark on a two-month preaching trip that took him first to North and South Carolina on the east coast, then all the way to the west coast of America. During the last two weeks of June and the first week in July, he preached in various cities in California. Then he drove north to preach a week in Spokane, Washington, and another week in Salem, Oregon. By July 24 he was at Port Alberni, British Columbia, preaching at the Pentecostal church where Ed Byskal was currently the pastor.

Generally speaking, Bill’s 1962 summer tour was a success. In most cities the Assemblies of God

cooperated with the Church of God, the United Pentecostal Church, the Four Square Church and other denominations to sponsor his meetings. Nevertheless it was not like the giant evangelistic campaigns he held during the 1950s, where often dozens of churches had cooperated and so filled large auditoriums with many thousands of people. Another difference became apparent after he returned home. Besides the many letters he received from people who had been healed in these campaigns, he also got many letters complaining about things that he had preached. Some people complained because he preached that the doctrine of the trinity was not Scriptural. Others complained because he mentioned the serpent’s seed. Some people didn’t agree with his stand against women preachers. Others were upset because he taught women should dress decently, and they didn’t agree with his idea of decency. (He taught that a woman should have long hair, and she should wear dresses that cover her knees. A woman should not wear pants, shorts, or paint her face with lipstick, eye shadow, etc.) One letter came from a denominational

minister, who said, “Brother Branham, I used to have the greatest confidence in you until I heard you say that my denomination was backsliding into sin. When you said that, I and two dozen people from my church, walked out of your meeting.”

Late in August Bill spent a few days praying at his cave in the Tunnel Mill wilderness area. One morning as he sat on a hillside watching the sunrise, the Lord revealed something to him which he later shared with his congregation. On September 8, 1962, Bill stood behind his pulpit in Jeffersonville and preached a sermon he called, “Present Stage of My Ministry.” He reminded his congregation of the vision he saw on the morning he laid the cornerstone to Branham Tabernacle—how he would plant an apple tree and a plum tree at the foot of the cross and gather the fruit from both trees. At the end of that vision, the Lord told him to read 2 Timothy 4. The Voice had not specified which verses of 2 Timothy 4, so that day Bill read only verses 1 through 5, and then stopped. From that day until recently, he had always considered 2 Timothy 4:1-5 as part of his commission: “*Preach the word...*

reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine... and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” Bill believed God gave him these verses to encourage him when he was a young man just starting his ministry, and to sustain him when later (as it now seemed to be the case) people turned away from his preaching of sound doctrine. In an evangelistic ministry like his, there always lurked the temptation to become discouraged.

But Paul wrote more to Timothy. A few weeks ago the Lord revealed to Bill that 2 Timothy 4: 7-8 also applied to his ministry. “*For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day...*” When Paul wrote this, he was an old man sitting in a prison

cell in Rome. Many of his former companions had forsaken him, thinking that God was no longer using him. Looking only with natural eyes, Paul's critics had a convincing argument. But Paul looked at his situation with spiritual eyes, and he saw the crowning moment of his life approaching. Bill was only 53, and he wasn't expecting to die any time soon; but he could still see a parallel between his ministry and Paul's ministry. To the world's way of looking at things, Bill's ministry had faded from what it once had been. Even many Christians thought that he was washed up; that for some reason God had left him. These people didn't realize that God often worked in this manner. Bill showed how God would sometimes allow his servants to sink to some low point before He would step forward and crown their ministries with success. Briefly Bill mentioned examples of this principle in the Bible, citing cases like Jacob, Joseph, Elijah, Daniel, and John the Baptist. Then he talked about the supreme example, Jesus Christ.

Many people loved Jesus when He was just healing the sick, feeding them with fish and bread, and

teaching them in parables. Eventually He put away the baby bottle and fed them the meat of the gospel. Jesus said, "*Blessed is he who is not offended in Me.*"³⁴³ But many people were offended when they heard the difficult things He taught. For example, Jesus said, "*Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.*" After hearing this, the crowds thinned drastically until even seventy of His closest followers left Him. Jesus turned to His twelve disciples and asked, "*Do you also want to go away?*" But Simon Peter answered Him, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"³⁴⁴ After that day, the popularity of Jesus slipped considerably. A critic might argue that Jesus had lost His favor with God, because He had lost favor with the crowds. Even Jesus, while He hung on the cross, cried out: "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*"³⁴⁵ That was the lowest point of His life, His darkest hour, just

³⁴³ Matthew 11:6; Luke 7:23 (NKJV)

³⁴⁴ John 6:47-71 (NKJV)

³⁴⁵ Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34 (NKJV)

before He said, “*It is finished.*” A few days later God crowned Jesus’ ministry with the glory of a resurrection.³⁴⁶

Bill said, “I’m trusting in Him to someday crown my ministry. I don’t know what or when it will be. When He is ready, I am. I hope He will crown my ministry with this: by letting me take the cloth of the Word and dress His Bride in the clothes of the Word for His righteousness. I hope He will crown me by letting me stand there on that day, and say (like John said), ‘Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.’”

“I’m going to continue to stay true to the Word until He is finished with me. That’s where my ministry is at today. I’m not washed up; I’m just washed into the King.”

³⁴⁶ John 19:30; John 20

Chapter 86

A Vision of Angels

1962

ONE MORNING in October of 1962, William Branham put on his work clothes with the idea of washing his car in the driveway. He picked up a bucket and a sponge, and had just put his hand on the doorknob to the front door when Meda came out of the kitchen, obviously upset. She told him that Joseph had done something naughty. After venting her complaint, she said, “Bill, I want you to spank him.”

Setting down his bucket, he walked into the kitchen to have a talk with his seven-year-old son. Joe stood by the kitchen table, tapping his fingertips together nervously. Bill pulled a chair away from the table, sat down, and lectured his son on why he should behave and obey his mother.

“I’m sorry, daddy,” Joseph said, putting his arms around his father’s neck and giving him a hug. “Please don’t spank me.”

“Oh, well—all right, Joe. I’ll let it go this time, but don’t do that again.”

“I won’t, daddy. I promise.”

Bill went to find Meda, so he could tell her that Joseph had apologized.

She had locked herself in their bedroom. Bill knocked on the door. She opened it and asked, “Did you spank him?” When he told her why he had not, she snapped, “He tells me that too; then he goes right back and does the same thing again. It’s so frustrating.”

“Honey, since he repented like that, I couldn’t spank him.”

“That’s because you don’t have to deal with him every day like I do! You’re always gone!” She slammed the door in his face and locked it.

“I don’t think she really meant that,” He thought, knowing what a gentle woman she normally was. During the 20 years they had been married, Meda had

never spoken an angry word to him before. Lately, she had seemed nervous. Since she was now 43, Bill wondered if her nervousness was due to hormonal changes from menopause.

Carrying his bucket outside, he filled it with soapy water and scrubbed the splattered bugs off of the front of his station wagon. While he was washing the hood, he heard someone say, “*Tell Meda to read Numbers chapter 12.*” He looked around. There was nobody in the yard except him. Thinking he must have imagined it, he returned to his task. Again he heard someone say, “*Tell her to read Numbers chapter 12.*” He paused, and then resumed washing the hood, but now his mind was alert to everything around him. A third time he heard that voice repeat its command. It seemed to come out of the air, somewhere near a tree by his house.

Leaving his washrag on the hood of his car, he went inside his house, picked up his Bible and read Numbers chapter 12. It told what happened to Miriam when she criticized Moses for marrying an Ethiopian woman. Her criticism of Moses so angered the Lord

that He allowed Satan to inflict Miriam with leprosy. When Moses prayed for his sister, after seven days the Lord healed her.

Taking his Bible, Bill walked down the hall to his bedroom door. He could hear the whir of her sewing machine running. When he tried the doorknob, it was still locked. He knocked and called her name.

“What do you want?” she asked stiffly.

“Sweetheart, let me in. I have a word from the Lord for you.”

He heard the door unlock, but she didn’t open it. Bill waited a few moments, then opened the door and walked into the room. His wife was sitting behind her sewing machine, adjusting the fabric under the needle. “Meda, you know I love you; but God didn’t like what you said to me. While I was washing the car, He told me to have you read Numbers chapter 12.” He handed her his Bible, and she read the chapter out loud. The strong language scared her. In fact it scared them both. She apologized profusely, and together they knelt and asked God to be merciful.

Two days later Meda felt a lot of pain in her left side. When she mentioned this to her husband, he took her right hand in his left hand to see if he could find out what was wrong by using his special gift. He felt that familiar cyst on her left ovary (familiar because he had first detected it in 1949 ;) but now the vibrations coming from it were noticeably stronger. When the pain persisted, she visited her doctor. He sent her to a gynecologist in Louisville, who confirmed Bill's diagnosis. Medical tests showed that Meda had a cyst the size of a walnut growing on her left ovary. At this point the gynecologist was not overly concerned. A cyst is a general term for a closed sac or pouch that contains a fluid, or a semisolid substance. Most cysts are harmless. Occasionally a cyst can become infected and cause problems, or sometimes it can change into a malignant growth. The gynecologist recommended that Meda wait a few months and see what this one does. It might recede on its own.

ON THE MORNING of October 14, 1962, William Branham preached "The Stature of a Perfect Man," taking his title and his text from Ephesians 4:11-15. He tied this together with the eight qualities of good character listed in 2 Peter 1:1-8: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. This portion of Scripture, like so many others, has a compound meaning. Obviously it means that all Christians should possess these characteristics. Looking deeper, it means that Jesus Christ is the perfect Man, and these are traits of His character. After Jesus died and resurrected, He sent back His spirit to His church, which now is His body on earth. He began perfecting this body through the seven church ages, beginning in the first age by establishing faith in His Word, and continuing into the second age by emphasizing virtue, and so on. Bill illustrated this on a black board by drawing a pyramid with eight levels. The lowest level he labeled faith, the next level virtue and so on, moving up until he reached the seventh level, which he labeled brotherly kindness. In his drawing he left a gap between the flat top of the

seventh level and the triangular capstone. The capstone itself he labeled love. This capstone represents Jesus Christ Himself, the head of the church, who will unite with His body at the time of the Rapture.

Then Bill talked about the Great Pyramid in Egypt, which was the model for all the lesser pyramids around it. Unlike the lesser pyramids, no king was ever buried in the Great Pyramid. Enoch, who was a prophet, built the Great Pyramid to symbolize through the ages that God would send the Redeemer and King some day. That happened when Jesus Christ came. At the core of the Great Pyramid stands the King's Chamber, empty as the day it was finished, symbolizing Jesus' empty tomb on Easter morning. The Great Pyramid is flat on top. It never had a capstone put on it. Somehow during construction, the capstone was rejected. King David spoke of this stone, and later Jesus quoted David: *"The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in*

our eyes."³⁴⁷ He noted that a pyramid is the only type of building where the cornerstone and the capstone are the same shape, symbolizing that Jesus both founded and will complete His church.

In November of 1962 the government tax case that had dogged Bill for so many years finally came to a conclusion. Mr. Orbison, Bill's attorney, called him and said the Internal Revenue Service had proposed a compromise. Bill drove over to his attorney's office to hear the government's proposal. What he heard nearly scared him to death. The IRS attorney said the government would settle for \$15,000 in back taxes, plus another \$10,000 in penalties. Add to that figure another \$15,000 to pay his attorney fees, and that would saddle Bill with a debt of \$40,000!

"Just shoot me and get it over with!" Bill said. "I only have \$75 in the bank. How am I going to pay \$40,000? I can't borrow it, because I don't have anything to use for collateral. Even if I could borrow

³⁴⁷ Psalms 118:22-23; Mathew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17

the money, how would I repay it? My salary is only \$100 a week. No, I won't agree to this at all. If I owed the money, I'd do my best to pay it; but I don't owe that money. Why don't they indict me if I'm guilty? They've had a dozen years to try, but they can't find any grounds to do it. No, I won't pay them until they prove that I owe those taxes."

Mr. Orbison whisked Bill into another room and consulted with him privately. "Brother Branham, if we don't take their offer, they will put you on trial. All the money people donated to your campaigns, the IRS will claim that it became your money when you endorsed those checks. Of course we can prove that every dollar went into Branham Tabernacle's bank account and was used for campaign expenses and other legitimate church expenses. Since you didn't use any of the money for yourself, we have a 99 percent chance of winning in court. However, when we prove these were unsolicited donations, the IRS will probably demand some kind of a gift tax. Conceivably the case could drag on for another five years and cost you more in legal expenses than the \$25,000 settlement they

propose. Besides, \$25,000 is a whole lot less than the \$355,000 they were asking for."

"What about my good name? Shouldn't I consider the value of that?"

"Brother Branham, the government attorneys can't find anything bad to say against you. Your life has been exemplary. But as soon as this goes to trial, the newspapers will print front-page headlines smearing mud over your reputation. When the trial is over and you're proven to be innocent, they'll report that in a short article on page 12. Most people won't hear anything about your acquittal. The damage to your reputation will already be done. I recommend that you accept their offer."

Bill left his attorney's office unconvinced. When he got home he said to his wife, "Wash the kids' faces and pack all our clothes. We're leaving. I'll be a vagabond for the rest of my life before I pay the government money I don't owe them."

Meda waited a while until her husband calmed down. Then she walked over to the chair where he was

sitting, put her arm on his shoulder, and said softly, “Is running going to help?”

“Meda, everything seems topsy-turvy. I’ve spent my life teaching people to pay their taxes and live honestly and decently. Why is the government picking on me?”

“Bill, have you asked God what He wants you to do with the government’s proposal?”

“Well,” He said reluctantly, “I guess I should at least pray about it.”

He walked into his den, sat behind his desk, and prayed. Soon an intriguing thought came to him. Almost every man in the Bible who was called to a spiritual office, if Satan couldn’t trip him up on a moral issue, then Satan used the government to hurt him. Many examples crossed his mind: Moses, Daniel, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, Peter, Paul, John the Revelator (all of whom the government either imprisoned or executed), and the list went on. Bill prayed, “Lord, what should I do? Give me an answer from Your Word.” As soon as he prayed this, God reminded him of a Bible story that seemed to apply.

One day Jesus was asked if He and His disciples would pay the yearly temple tax. Jesus said to Peter, “Actually, we are free from this obligation. Nevertheless, so that we don’t offend them, go down to the sea and cast in a hook. The fish you catch will have a coin in its mouth. Take that coin and use it to pay our tax.”³⁴⁸ Bill thought, “That is true, Lord. You have fish-banks all over the world. Show me where to get the money, and I’ll pay the government what they want.”

The nearest fish-bank turned out to be his old friend, William Dauch.³⁴⁹ This eighty-nine year old millionaire, who lived in Lima, Ohio, had earned his fortune making paper products. William Dauch first heard about William Branham in 1958. That was the year his wife, Gladys, was dying from cancer, and someone suggested that she write to the Branham Campaigns office in Jeffersonville and ask for a free prayer cloth. She did. As soon as she opened the letter and touched that prayer cloth, she felt something like lightning pass through her body. Instantly she was

³⁴⁸ Matthew 17:24-27

³⁴⁹ The German spelling of Dauch is pronounced “dow”, which rhymes with “cow.”

healed. The Dauchs drove to Jeffersonville, listened to Bill preach, and then were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Since then, they frequently followed Bill around the country to attend his campaigns.

William Dauch said he would be happy to give Bill the \$40,000 he needed. Bill refused to take the money as a gift, but he did accept it as a loan. He said he would pay it back in ten years, hopefully paying four thousand dollars every year. William Dauch didn't care if it was ever paid back, but he agreed to this stipulation because it seemed to be important to his friend.

Early in November, Bill wrote a check for \$25,000 to the Internal Revenue Service. On the memo line at the bottom left-hand side of the check, he wrote: Paid in full for all back taxes. Then he mailed it. A week passed. On November 22, he was scheduled to preach a week in Shreveport, Louisiana. Just before he left for Shreveport, he called his bank to see if that check had cleared. The bank teller said it had. Bill hung up the phone and breathed a sigh of relief. Running into the kitchen, he hugged his wife and said, "Honey, I'm

free! The old account is settled. Now I can go wherever I want to, wherever the Lord leads me. I'm free! Oh, what a wonderful thing it is to be pardoned, when I could not do anything to free myself!" He felt almost as good as he had felt 30 years before on the day he accepted Jesus as his Savior. He was free!

One day in December of 1962, Mrs. Steffy, who regularly attended Branham Tabernacle, came to Bill's house for prayer. She was scheduled for surgery in Louisville the next day and she was worried about the outcome of her operation. A dream she had the previous night also concerned her. She said, "I dreamed I was walking across a western prairie and I saw an old man standing on top of a big hill. He had white hair, and a long beard, and he was wearing a white robe that flapped in the breeze. I wondered who it could be, but as I got closer, I realized it was Elijah the prophet standing on that hill, looking east. I decided I had to meet him, so I ran up the hill and fell at his feet. He said, 'What do you want, Sister Steffy?'

Brother Branham, that voice was your voice. When I looked up, it was you standing there!”

Mrs. Steffy’s dream wasn’t a surprise to Bill. Before she told it to him, he had already seen the same thing in a vision. That always happened when God used him to interpret a dream for someone else. Although Bill knew the interpretation to Mrs. Steffy’s dream, he kept it to himself for the moment. It seemed to fit a pattern. During the past two years, five other people told him they had dreamed about him. Each dream was different, but they all had some common threads. For one thing, all six dreams placed him in the west. God seemed to be speaking to him in a roundabout way, preparing him for something. As yet, he couldn’t quite weave the threads together into a complete picture, and that bothered him.

The next day he drove across the bridge to Louisville and visited Mrs. Steffy after her operation. So far the weather in December had been mild. Today the temperature had dropped below freezing and a gray sheet of clouds hung over the city, threatening to snow. When he got home, he saw a surveyor’s stake pounded

into the ground next to one of the pyramid-shaped stone pillars that marked the entrance to his driveway. A survey crew was working a little further along the street, measuring through a transit and pounding more wooden stakes into the ground. Bill walked over and asked the foreman what they were planning to do. Mr. Goyne unrolled a city map and showed Bill how they were going to widen the street next year.

Bill went back to his house. As soon as he walked in the door, Meda asked him to take her grocery shopping. They got in their station wagon and he backed out onto Ewing Lane, turning the direction that would take him past the survey crew. Seeing Ray King, one of his neighbors, working with the surveyors, Bill stopped and rolled down his window to talk.

“Hey, Mud,” He said, calling him by his boyhood nickname, “Tell me about that stake you put next to my driveway. I thought my property went all the way to the street.”

“Billy, the city is going to widen this street. They have the right-of-way and an easement all the way

back to where I set that stake. Everything on the street-side of those stakes has got to be moved—fences, trees, sidewalks; everything has got to go. It affects my yard too.”

“I would like to keep my stone pillars. Maybe I can get Brother Wood to move them for me. He’s a stonemason.”

Ray King had a different idea. “The contractor who is doing the road construction is responsible for moving everything,” He said. “Why don’t you let him do it?”

As Bill drove away, he thought about King’s suggestion. Somehow it struck him as familiar, as if he had experienced this whole situation before. When he returned from the store, he set the groceries on the kitchen counter, and then hurried to his den room. Taking his vision book from its place on a bookshelf, he flipped through its pages until he came to a vision he had recorded in February of 1958.

Bill read: “A surveyor’s stake driven down on my property... stones blocking my driveway... road graders and scrapers running up and down the street...

a young man on a bulldozer tearing up my front yard”—the memory of it came rushing back. He had seen this vision while Billy Paul was driving him home from Waterloo, Iowa, after a faith-healing campaign that his friend Gene Norman had organized. He remembered questioning that young man in the vision who was making such a mess of his front yard. When the young man sassed him, Bill slugged him and knocked him down. Then the angel of the Lord had warned him to, “*Bypass this. When you see that stake driven down in your front yard by your gate, then go west.*” Next he had seen his family sitting in a covered wagon that was parked in his driveway. Bill sat in the driver’s seat and took the reins. When he snapped the leather lines to the lead horse, the covered wagon changed into his modern Ford station wagon and the vision ended.

Bill closed his vision book. Finally the colorful threads in those six dreams were forming a pattern he could understand—they all pointed west. That stake in his driveway, as foretold by this five-year-old vision, completed the picture. Gathering his family around

him, Bill reminded them of the vision. Then he showed them the stake in their front yard, and told them to get ready; soon they would be moving west. The next day he called Gene Norman (who was now living in Tucson, Arizona) and asked Gene to find him a house or an apartment that he could rent.

A few days later Meda visited her gynecologist in Louisville, Kentucky. She learned that the cyst on her left ovary had grown to the size of a lemon. Her doctor said it should be surgically removed. Bill explained that he planned to move to Tucson as soon as Gene Norman found a place for them to live. The gynecologist referred them to Dr. Scott, a gynecologist in Tucson, and sent Meda's medical records with them.

About three o'clock Saturday morning, December 22, 1962, Bill got out of bed and walked to the kitchen to drink a cup of water. On his way back to bed, he checked on his son. Joseph had kicked his blankets off in his sleep, so Bill covered him again. Then he returned to his own bed and his own warm blankets. Sometime around daybreak he dreamed he saw a big

man take a three-sided stick and knock a small woman to the ground with it. This man and woman were supposed to be his father and mother, although neither one looked like his real father and mother. While the woman lay on the ground whimpering, this big man strutted around her, proud of what he had done. Shakily, the woman stood. Again the big man whacked her in the head with his three-sided club. She crumpled into a limp pile of submission. In the dream Bill watched this from a distance. He thought, "I can't tackle that man because he's too big. I'd never win if it came to a fight. Still, he has no business mistreating her that way." When he saw that man hit that poor little woman again, it upset him so much that he lost his fear. Standing between the cruel man and his victim, Bill said, "You have no right to strike her." Suddenly Bill's arm muscles bulged, expanding until he looked like a giant. The woman was trying to get up and the man lifted his club to hit her. Bill threatened, "If you strike her again, you'll have to deal with me." The man gauged Bill's muscles and hesitated.

Bill woke, startled with the shift from dream to reality. Meda was not in the bedroom. He heard breakfast noises coming from the kitchen. Through the window he saw tiny snowflakes falling. Settling back on his pillow, he thought, “What was that all about? It seems strange that I should dream about a woman.” Soon a vision came to interpret the dream. That woman represented Christians in churches today, and that man represented the denominational system that rules them. That three-sided stick represented the false concept of a triune God, and the incomplete baptism that goes with it. Every time a congregation tries to rise and accept the truth about baptism in Jesus’ name, their denomination whacks them down with that Trinitarian dogma. For years Bill was reluctant to challenge the system because it was so big. Finally he did challenge it, and then the muscles of his faith grew to the size of Romans 8:31: “*If God be for us, who can be against us?*”

It was a strange morning. The Holy Spirit seemed to be hovering at the fringe of his consciousness, like a dove fluttering at the far corner of his sight. When he

turned to see it, the dove receded; when he tried to ignore it, the dove returned to coo at him so that he couldn’t forget it was there. Around nine o’clock he locked himself in his bedroom so he could seek the Lord undisturbed. Kneeling by the bed, he prayed until a vision unlocked the door into another dimension.

A vision and a dream are similar in some aspects. They both deal with the transfer of information from the subconscious to the conscious mind through neuro-chemical processes that imprint images in the appropriate areas of the brain. All similarities end there. Dreams are a by-product of the mind sorting through the millions of bits of information collected during each day, classifying and filing some, and discarding the rest. Sometimes God does manipulate these images to send a message, but usually dreams are just a natural function of the brain while it sleeps. Conversely, a vision occurs when a seer is awake. During a vision, God supernaturally bypasses the sensory nerves and creates images directly in the brain. Bill sometimes tried to explain this by saying a seer has his conscious mind and his subconscious

mind fused together. Using current terminology, perhaps it could be described as “supernaturally-induced virtual reality.” From the perspective of the seer, he is there—seeing, hearing, and experiencing.

This vision he saw now placed him in a mountainous region northeast of Tucson, Arizona. Thorny plants grew sparsely along the reddish slopes and rocky ridges. Although he couldn’t see him in the vision, Bill knew he was talking to his son, Joseph.

Nearby stood a bush filled with tiny birds, like finches, perched on the upper branches. The shape of the bush made this flock of birds form a pyramid. They looked weary, scruffy, even battle-scarred, as though they had flown a long ways and were about worn out. They fluttered back and forth from limb to limb, chirping incessantly. It seemed like they were trying to tell him something. Then one bird flew east, and a second later the whole flock followed, keeping that pyramid formation as they flew. Immediately he heard the fluttering sounds of larger wings. From the west came a flock of gray doves, flying past him in a

“V” formation as they followed the tiny birds eastward.

In this vision Bill leaned over and picked a cocklebur from the cuff of his pant leg. An explosion shook the earth, causing rocks to roll down the mountainside. The blast sounded like thunder overhead, or perhaps a supersonic airplane flying close to the ground and breaking the sound barrier. Looking west, Bill saw a pyramid-shaped constellation of stars dominating the sky. They were growing larger, as though they were coming toward him at a speed beyond his comprehension. Then he realized they were not stars, but angels—powerful beings with wings swept back, heads turned slightly, clothed in white armor, rushing toward him from the realms of eternity. They came at him so fast that Bill didn’t have time to count them accurately. There were at least five, and no more than seven. Before he could blink his eyes, they surrounded him, lifting him into their midst. He couldn’t see them now, but he felt the force of their presence around him. They terrified him. He thought, “This must mean I’m going to die. I will be killed in

some kind of explosion.” Then he heard Joseph calling to him. He thought, “No, if I was killed in that explosion, it would have killed Joseph too. I can still hear him talking. Besides, the death angel comes alone. If there are five angels, five stands for grace; and if there are seven angels, seven stands for completion. Either way, it could mean the climax of my new ministry.” He raised his voice, saying, “Lord Jesus, what do You want me to do?”

Suddenly Bill saw his bedroom. It was 10 o’clock. He heard Meda twisting the locked doorknob and calling to him. He didn’t answer. His tongue felt numb, as though a dentist had given him an anesthetic injection. His whole body felt limp and spent.

Sometimes Christians talk about feeling the presence of the Lord as though it is a pleasurable experience. When they do, they are confusing His presence with His blessings. The actual presence of almighty God is so awesome that it can terrify a person to the point of paralysis. Both Isaiah and John the Revelator had this kind of experience, where they stood near that

awesome presence and felt like they were going to die.³⁵⁰ That is how Bill felt now.

Meda quit trying to get into their bedroom. Slowly the numbness left Bill’s muscles. When he felt strong enough to stand, he paced the floor for thirty minutes, dazzled by the vision, wondering what it meant. He still thought it could mean his death. How could anyone survive such an explosion? Finally he stopped and prayed, “Lord Jesus, if this vision means I am going to be killed soon, will You tell me? Then I’ll know not to tell my people about it. If it does mean my death, please send Your power back upon me so I will know.”

He waited awhile. Nothing happened. While he stood there, it occurred to him that those tiny birds might represent the first pull of his ministry—the sign in his hand. If they did, then the second flock of birds represented the second pull of his ministry—discernment by vision. Perhaps the constellation of angels represented the third pull of his ministry. He prayed, “Lord Jesus, if it does not mean my death at

³⁵⁰ Isaiah 6:1-5; Revelation 1:10-18

this time, but instead it means You have something for me to do that will be revealed to me later, then send Your power back upon me.”

The force of the whirlwind that swirled around him lifted him from the floor and set him in the corner of the room, dazed and semiconscious. When he came to his senses, he was sitting with his Bible on his lap, the pages opened to Romans chapter 9. He felt strongly impressed to read the last four verses of that chapter:

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion [Zion] a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and

whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.

Closing his Bible, he stood and walked over to the window. By now the snow covered his yard a few inches deep. Raising his hands, he said, “Lord God, this is a strange day to me. What do all these things mean? If that Scripture is Your explanation, let me read it again.” He picked up his Bible and opened it using his right thumb to hold a random wad of pages. It opened to the same place: “*Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone...*”

ON SUNDAY NIGHT, December 30, 1962, Bill preached a sermon he called “Is This the Sign of the End, Sir?” After telling his audience about the vision where he was caught up into a constellation of angels, he speculated on whether or not this vision had something to do with the events described in Revelation 10:1-7.

In the first part of Revelation 10, John saw Christ (in the form of a mighty Angel) descending from heaven, clothed with a cloud, a rainbow over His head, His face as bright as the sun and His feet looking like Pillars of Fire. In one hand He was holding an open book. When His feet (those Pillars of Fire) touched the world, He roared like a lion; and immediately John heard seven thunderous voices, but he was forbidden to write what the voices said. Then Christ, the Covenant Angel, said that finally the time had come for the seventh angel to finish revealing the mystery of God—at least as much of that mystery as God will let His prophets see.

Bill said, “I believe that the seventh angel of Revelation 10:7 is the seventh church age messenger of Revelation 3:14. Both Scriptures refer to the same person, the messenger to the last church age. Notice the type of message he has—finishing all the mysteries of God that are written in the Book. The seventh angel takes all the loose ends that reformers and theologians couldn’t put together, and he ties them

together, finishing the entire mystery of God, at least so far as it is written in this Book.”

Next Bill read from the notes in his Scofield Study Bible on Matthew 13 concerning the mysteries of God. Reverend Scofield wrote: “A “mystery” in Scripture is a previously hidden truth, now divinely revealed, but in which a supernatural element still remains despite the revelation. The greater mysteries are: (1) the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; (2) the mystery of Israel’s blindness during this age; (3) the mystery of the translation of living saints at the end of this age; (4) the mystery of the New Testament church as one body composed of Jews and Gentiles; (5) the mystery of the church as the Bride of Christ; (6) the mystery of the in-living Christ; (7) the “mystery of God even Christ,” that is, Christ as the incarnate fullness of the Godhead embodied, in whom all the divine wisdom for man subsists; (8) the mystery of the processes by which godlikeness is restored to man; (9) the mystery of iniquity; (10) the mystery of the seven stars; and (11) the mystery of Babylon.³⁵¹”

³⁵¹ Scriptural references listed in Reverend Scofield’s notes, respectively, (1) Matthew 13: 3-50; (2) Romans 11:25, with context; (3) 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1

Basically, Bill agreed with this list, but he felt Mr. Scofield didn't go far enough. He added: (12) the mystery of the serpent's seed; (13) the mystery of the true meaning of grace, which will not be held in disgrace; (14) the mystery of hell. It might be long and horrible, but it cannot be eternal because the word *eternal* means "no beginning and no end" and hell was created and therefore will be destroyed; (15) the mystery of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost without sensation, but the person of Christ performing in you the same works that He did; (16) the mystery of water baptism, where the extreme Trinitarian view has used the titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, not understanding that these titles are fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; (17) the mystery of the Pillar of Fire returning in the end-time and revealing Himself through the last church age messenger; (18) the seven mysteries of the book in Revelation that are sealed with seven seals.³⁵²

Thessalonians 4:14-17; (4) Ephesians 3:1-11; Romans 16:25; Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 4:3; (5) Ephesians 5:28-32; (6) Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:26-27; (7) Colossians 2:2,9; 1 Corinthians 2:7; (8) 1 Timothy 3:16; (9) 2 Thessalonians 2:7; Matthew 13:33; (10) Revelation 1:20; (11) Revelation 17:5,7.

³⁵² Note: William Branham does not give Scriptural references to these additional mysteries in this sermon because he deals with each subject in detail in other sermons. I

For the rest of this sermon Bill posed questions relating to Revelation chapter 10. Some day the events in Revelation 10 will happen. Could this be the season? It looked like it might be, but he wasn't sure. How could anyone be sure? God interprets His Word by bringing it to pass. Before the event, men can only speculate as to what a prophecy means. Afterwards, it is easier to see how the event matched the Bible prophecy.

At the end of this sermon, Bill said, "There are people sitting here tonight who were standing on the banks of the Ohio river when that voice said to me, 'As John the Baptist was sent to forerun the first

have listed here a few references to aid the reader who is curious. A complete list of references would take up many pages. Of course the revelation of the mystery is in the explanation. (12) Genesis 3:14-15; (13) Ephesians 2:5-9; James 2:18-24; Romans 8:28-30; (14) William Branham taught that hell is real, but no Scripture says hell is eternal. Matthew 18:8 and Mark 9:45 both say the fire goes on forever, but not that the people suffer forever. Revelation 20:14 says death and hell are both cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death (destruction.) 2 Thessalonians 1:9 says that sinners are punished with everlasting destruction. Certainly, once they are destroyed, that destruction is permanent. There must be a punishment for sin or God could not be just. But a merciful God also puts an appropriate limit on that punishment. If people could suffer in hell forever, they would have everlasting life. In truth, there is only one way to live forever, and that is to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. (15) John 3:1-8; 6:28-29; 14:12; (16) Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; (17) Acts 26:13-19, Revelation 1:11; 21:6; 22:13. The first age had a messenger led by the Pillar of Fire. Because Jesus is the beginning and ending, what Jesus did in the first church age, he will do in the last church age. (18) Revelation 6:1-17; 8:1.

coming of Christ, you are sent with a message to forerun the second coming of Christ.’ What did John do? John said, ‘Behold, there is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.’ My brethren, has that hour arrived again? I don’t say it has; I don’t know; but I am asking you. I want you to think about it. Will that blast in the vision do such mighty things until the church will understand the mysteries of God? Will it turn the hearts of the children back to their fathers, as Malachi 4 prophesied? Is this the sign of the end-time, sirs? I don’t know, but it looks very Scriptural to me. I saw those angels, and then a blast like thunder shook the earth. God knows I’m telling you the truth. Just remember, something is fixing to happen.

“Let me say, because I am going west—it isn’t that I am leaving this tabernacle. This is the church that the Lord God gave me. Here is my headquarters. I’m only going in obedience to a commandment that’s given me by vision. My son, Billy Paul, will remain my secretary. My office will be right here at this church. By the help of God, I’ll be here when this thing is finished and preach the seven seals; and any tapes that

I make will be made right here at this church. Right here, as far as I know, is the place where I can preach with more liberty than I can anywhere else in the world, because you people believe me. I don’t know what lies in the future, but I know who holds the future. That’s the main thing.”

Chapter 87

The King’s Sword

1963

TUCSON, ARIZONA is a desert oasis 40 miles north of the United States/Mexican border. In 1963 the city of Tucson housed around 300,000 people. Its population increased during the winter months as thousands of visitors came from the colder northern

states to enjoy Arizona's warmer climate. "Snow birds," the locals called them. Many of these "snow birds" returned north in the spring to escape the intense heat of Tucson's summer. Some people always stayed, and year by year the city grew bigger.

William Branham and his family arrived in Tucson around noon on Friday, January 4, 1963. Although Bill had visited Tucson several times, he was impressed again with its spacious four-lane avenues. Space is something the Southwest has in abundance. What it lacks is water. Bill noticed a scarcity of lawns. Many people decorated their yards with cactus and other native plants to conserve water. Most of the houses were made from bricks, many with stucco walls and clay tile roofs in the Spanish style. What impressed Bill most about Tucson was the range of jagged mountains that surrounded the city on three sides. The Catalina Mountains to the north of Tucson marked the southern tip of the Continental Divide.

First the Branham family stopped by the Normans. Gene Norman led them to the small house he had rented for them. Gene suspected it was too small for a

family of five, but it was the only thing he could find in the price range Bill had specified. Bill thanked him, and then his family unpacked their belongings from the car. Later that week Billy Paul arrived in Tucson with his wife, Loyce, and their infant son. Billy Paul rented a larger house that could double as his home and his office where he could coordinate his father's campaigns.

Monday morning, Meda enrolled their children in school. Rebekah was 16 years old and halfway through her junior year of high school. Sarah was 11 and in the sixth grade. Seven-year-old Joseph was in the second grade.

It wasn't long before Bill rented a bigger house for his family; sort of... Actually, he rented both sides of a duplex apartment house. His addresses were 3908 and 3910 Park Avenue. Both apartments were small compared to his house in Jeffersonville, but together they gave him four bedrooms and that was enough to keep his family comfortable. Now they would have more room than the house Gene Norman had put them in at first. Since Bill didn't know how long God

wanted him to stay in this city, these two apartments would do for now. If God told him to stay in Tucson permanently, he could look for a larger, more suitable house later.

On Saturday, January 12, 1963, Bill drove a hundred miles north and began a preaching campaign that would take him to a dozen churches in the Phoenix area over the next two weeks. On Sunday afternoon, January 27, he finished this preaching tour at the Ramada Inn, where he spoke to the Full Gospel Businessmen on the subject of “The Absolute.” He showed how important the concept of an absolute is to our society, using examples ranging from the umpires at baseball games and traffic lights at intersections, to the legal decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States. He took his text from Philippians 1:20-22, where Paul said, “*For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*” Jesus Christ was Paul’s absolute; the fountain of all his strength and the basis for all his decisions. So must it be with every Christian. Bill said, “In this atomic age of uncertainty, the Christian needs more than just the experience of joining church. You need an

anchor, an absolute that you know won’t fail. Churches will fail, and people will fail, but Christ cannot fail. He is the absolute to the believer. If Christ is your absolute, and you are tied to Him, then you are tied to the Word of God. How do you know if you have the right absolute or not? If you read in the Scripture something that Christ commissioned us to do, and then someone tells you that was just for the disciples or it applies to someone else—and you believe that person, and don’t believe the Scripture, then Christ is not your absolute; that person who twisted the Scripture and led you out of the way is your absolute. Christ, the Word, must be your absolute. Don’t let anything steer you out of the way of the Word.

“When God gives a man the Holy Spirit, He sets him with his face towards Calvary and the Word before him. Now, little vines will rise up from the edge of that highway, come in and wrap around that little tree, and you think it’s very innocent. But the first thing you know, it has such a hold on you until it pulls you the wrong way and makes you lean the wrong way. And

so have worldly philosophies entered among us until it has begun to pull us toward the world. You must take the sharp two-edged sword of God's Word and cut free from everything worldly so you can stay right on that Word, because that is the ultimate; that is the absolute to every believer.

"A man or woman who is filled with the Holy Spirit will punctuate every promise of God with an 'Amen.' Someone might tell you, 'The day of miracles is past. There is no such a thing as divine healing. The baptism of the Holy Ghost was for another age.' Then you read in the Bible what Peter said on the day of Pentecost, when they were all pricked in their hearts and wanted to know what to do to be saved. Now, if joining a church was the answer, he would have said, 'You must find the body and join the church.' But he didn't say that. He gave them the exact prescription of what they must do. He said, 'Repent, every one of you, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to those who are far off, even as

many as the Lord our God shall call.'" There is the absolute. The Spirit-filled Christian will always believe and act upon the Word of God.

Returning to Tucson, Bill took a much-needed rest. He still felt the pressure of uncertainty in his chest, squeezing him like a steer might squeeze a cowboy against the side of a corral. He could push it away, but it always came back. One morning shortly after he returned from Phoenix, he awoke early and lay in bed thinking about his future, wondering why the Lord had sent him out West. In his mind he reviewed his recent vision about some angels coming to him in the form of a pyramid. The vision had started with an explosion. How could anyone survive such a mighty blast? And yet, he had heard Joseph calling to him. What did it mean? If the Lord planned to take him home to heaven soon, he would have to arrange for his church to care for his family. Perhaps they could grant his family a pension. Billy Paul was almost 28 years old and could look after himself, but Bill worried about the rest of his family because they were completely dependent on him for survival.

Quietly he heard a voice in his head say, “*Go to Sabino Canyon.*”

Skipping his breakfast, he left the apartment and drove to the northern edge of Tucson where the Catalina Mountains rose abruptly, stopping the city from spreading in that direction. He followed the road east, parallel to the mountains that shone like brass in the morning sunshine. Numerous canyons serrated this mountain range. One of these canyons was now a national park. Bill entered Sabino Canyon and drove his car north up the narrow road that followed Sabino Creek. There was a lot of water in the creek during the winter months, fed by snow melting off the slopes of Mount Lemmon. The water flowed from one pool to another, sometimes cascading over boulders, and sometimes going around them, watering a variety of trees—sycamores, cottonwoods, willows, ash, and walnut trees. At first the creek was on the east side of him (to his right), but in just over a mile he crossed the creek nine times on narrow bridges made of stone and concrete, ending up with the creek on his left. Soon the road split away from the creek and climbed several

hundred feet, ending in a parking lot for the hiking trails.

Bill took the trail that followed the eastern canyon wall. He was above the trees now, listening to the squabbles of territorial birds below him. From somewhere on the cliffs above, a dove cooed to its mate. The western slope of Sabino Canyon was catching sunlight, but along the eastern slope Bill walked in the shadow of the huge cliffs towering above him.

The landscape here was a botanical wonderland. Because they were tall, saguaro cactus stood out distinctly on the lower slopes like soldiers surrendering with their arms raised; but smaller cactus varieties defended their niches among the rocks too. There were barrel cactus sporting hundreds of needles that curved into hooks; prickly pear cactus that looked like a collection of ping-pong paddles with needles in them—and many more kinds. There were also desert shrubs, like mesquite and paloverde. These shrubs had thorns on their branches, hidden among a profusion of tiny, waxy leaves. Above him the canyon slope met a

vertical cliff hundreds of feet high. Very little vegetation clung to those rocky heights.

After hiking for about 20 minutes, Bill came to some craggy buttes—a grouping of intermediate mountains that stood far below the uppermost cliffs, yet still a long ways above the canyon’s bottom. He climbed the nearest butte, stopping to rest at a relatively flat place near the top. A couple of rocky columns still jutted far above him, but for his purpose, this spot was all the higher he wanted to climb. He noticed a deer walking along a game trail on the slope below him. Bill stood motionless and watched as the deer paused, raised its head and listened for the sound of danger. The only sound Bill could hear was the faint gurgle of the stream blending with the low-pitched breath from a slight breeze. Suddenly a gust of wind blew off his hat, which rolled a few feet before lodging in the grip of an ocotillo plant. Startled by this movement, the deer bolted.

Retrieving his hat, Bill knelt beside the ocotillo to pray. The ocotillo is a bush, but it doesn’t have a central trunk; rather the branches all stem upward

from a central point on the ground. Its branches are covered with leaves, and each leaf hides a one-inch long thorn. The ocotillo is a relative of the thorny plant in Israel that long ago some Roman soldier wove into a crown of thorns to put on the head of Jesus Christ the day He was crucified.

Setting his Bible on the ground, Bill turned his head toward the eastern cliffs, lifted his hands above his head, and prayed out loud, “Oh, Lord, what does that explosion mean in the last vision You gave me? Does it mean my death? I’m not afraid of dying, but I need to know so I can prepare my family. If You are going to take me ‘home’ soon, let it happen up here where no one will find my body. Maybe someday You could let Joseph find my Bible lying here.”

Suddenly he felt something solid touch his right hand. Instinctively his fingers gripped the object, and he looked to see what it was. He was astonished to see a two-edged sword nestled in his hand, the blade pointing skyward. He brought down his hand to examine it closely. The hand-guard looked like gold and the handle looked like pearl. The sun had just

risen enough to shine through a saddle in the canyon's eastern horizon and the flood of bright rays caused the blade of the sword to glisten like polished silver. The cutting edges looked razor-sharp. Bill felt a mixture of attraction and repulsion for that short, double-edged blade. He had always been afraid of a sword and he was glad he did not live in the days when swords were sometimes used to settle disputes.

"This is strange," He said, swishing the blade through the air. "It feels just as real as anything I've ever held in my hand. Somewhere near me is the same God who created a ram for Abraham, the same one who created those squirrels for me in Indiana and Kentucky. Now He has created this sword. But what am I supposed to do with it? I know kings used their swords to knight heroes. Perhaps this means I'm supposed to lay my hands on someone and ordain him as a minister."

He was stunned to hear a voice rumble down from the canyon heights, "*It's the sword of the King!*"

"But why show me a king's sword?" Bill asked, still uncertain.

"*Not 'a' king's sword—*" the voice replied, emphasizing the article; "*It is 'THE' King's sword!*"

In a flash of sunlight, the sword vanished. Although Bill's hand was now empty, his heart was full. Now he understood. God is *the* King, and *the* King's sword is His Word—the Bible, the compass Bill used to guide his life; his absolute upon which he had staked his eternal destiny. While his racing heart slowed to a normal pace, he felt the Lord speaking to him quietly, like a voice in his head, saying "*Don't fear death. This is the third pull of your ministry.*"

Picking up his Bible, he ran back to his car, shouting with a joy that echoed between the golden walls of the canyon. Now he was satisfied that the vision of angels did not mean he was going to die—at least not yet. God had something more for him to accomplish first.

A few days later, Bill asked Billy Paul to send a postcard to everyone on the Branham Campaigns' mailing list, informing them that he would be in Jeffersonville from March 17 through 24, conducting a special series of meetings. He preached only once in February, and that engagement was in Tucson, so he

didn't have to travel very far. Well rested, he looked forward to hunting javelina hogs before driving back to Jeffersonville.

The javelina hog (or peccary) is the American equivalent of the European pig; and yet it is different from a domesticated pig—smaller, tougher, and well adapted to surviving in the harsh environment of the southwestern desert.

That year in Arizona, hunting season began on Friday, March 1 and ran through March 10. Originally Bill planned to hunt on the opening day of the season. His plan changed when he received a long telegram from a woman in Texas. She begged him to come to Houston and ask the court to be merciful to her son, who was facing the death penalty for his crimes. Having read about this case in the newspaper, Bill felt that if he didn't try to save the young man's life, he would never be able to hunt again. He postponed his hunting expedition and planned a quick trip to Houston. He also called a pastor in Houston who had asked him to preach for him if ever he was in the city.

On Sunday March 3, 1963, Bill and Billy Paul drove to Houston, Texas. Monday morning Bill had his moment in court.³⁵³ Monday evening Bill preached at the City Auditorium, and then left for home immediately after the service. Friends drove him back to Tucson, while Billy Paul continued northeast to Jeffersonville.

On Wednesday, March 6, William Branham, Fred Sothmann, and Gene Norman loaded Sothmann's pickup with their rifles and camping equipment. They followed the highway east to Wilcox, then turned north and drove on a gravel road until they came to the eastern side of the Galiuro mountain range. They were near the ghost town of Sunset, Arizona, which had once been a thriving mining community. Sunset Peak, at 7,104 feet above sea level, was the highest point in the area. It rose at least 2000 feet above the floor of the valley between Galiuro mountains to the east and the Pinaleno mountains to the north.

That afternoon they set up their camp in a dry wash near the face of a cliff that curved around them like the cupped fingers of a giant hand lying horizontally. The

³⁵³ Instead of receiving the death penalty, this young man was sentenced to life in prison.

floor of the canyon was dappled with mesquite trees, which gave the hunters plenty of shade when they were in camp. On Thursday Bill spotted a herd of javelinas and he shot one; but his friends returned to camp that evening with their bullets still in their rifle clips. Now that Bill knew the general area where a herd of javelinas was moving, he thought he could help Fred and Gene shoot their hogs the next day.

At daybreak on Friday, March 8, Bill sent Fred and Gene hiking one way while he went another, intending to drive the wild pigs in their direction. This was chaparral country, dominated by mesquite trees growing 10 to 25 feet high, depending on the depth of the soil. The higher elevation of the Galiuro Wilderness made the climate here too cold to support the long-armed saguaro cactus; but other varieties abounded, like barrel cactus and prickly pear. Vegetation grew thickest in the canyon bottoms, giving lots of cover for the javelina to hide. Bill hiked to the ridge on top of the canyon so he could spot the camouflaged hogs more easily. Now he had a good view of the series of ridges that rose into the higher

peaks of this modest range of mountains. Sunset Peak rose a little ways to the south of him and China Peak stood ten miles farther north. Tucson was about 40 miles to the southwest of him.

He walked for several hours, sometimes on higher ground, sometimes down in the gullies, stopping frequently to study the terrain through his binoculars. Around 8 o'clock he spotted Gene and Fred at least a mile away from him. Fred was on the other side of the canyon. Bill waved and Fred waved back. The sun, shining in a cloudless sky, had burned away the morning chill. Sweat dripped from the sweatband of Bill's black hat. He sat on a rock to rest, laying his gun across his lap. Noticing a cocklebur stuck to one pant leg, he picked it off and looked at the spiny seed pinched between his thumb and finger. The cocklebur was not a common plant in these desert mountains, yet somehow this seed looked familiar.

His peripheral vision caught movement in the canyon below. A javelina boar appeared next to a juniper tree about 500 yards away. With his binoculars, Bill could now see about twenty pigs moving through

the brush. They were unaware of their danger. Bill dropped the cocklebur he was holding and slowly crept away from that spot. When the javelinas were out of sight, he rose and ran over a ridge, then followed a game trail to the bottom of the canyon. As he ran, he thought about the best way to move the wild pigs up the canyon floor so his friends could get a clear shot at them.

Suddenly a tremendous explosion shook the earth. Dust rose into the air as rocks the size of mop buckets tumbled down the canyon slopes. For an instant, Bill thought someone had shot him. Looking toward the western sky, he saw a white pyramid approaching him faster than a supersonic jet. Then he realized it was a constellation of angels. They were powerful beings clothed in white armor, with their wings swept back and their arms stretched forward. Bill sucked in his breath, and before he could exhale, these angels surrounded him and somehow (not with their hands) they lifted him into the air. As earth and sky swirled about him, his senses stretched to the limits of human perception, and then went beyond. There were seven

angels in all. Three angels hovered on each side of him, positioned so they were slanting upward, with one angel on top completing the triangle. The angel in the bottom right-hand corner drew his attention. This angel glowed more brightly than the rest, as though somehow he was more noteworthy than his companions. Counting from left to right, this was the seventh angel. Bill felt strangely attracted to him, as though somehow a special bond existed between them. Suddenly this angel raised a sword and said, “*Return to Jeffersonville, where the seven sealed mysteries in Revelation will be opened.*”

Swiftly, yet gently, the angels set him down on the gravelly canyon floor. Then they shot up through the sky into the stratosphere, where they paused to look back on him. As Bill watched, these angels changed their appearance into what looked like beings of light—but they didn’t look like any earthly or galactic lights. They looked—well—supernatural. They were beings of pure spirit who, for a short time, became physical in this world. Bill watched these seven angels diffuse until they blended into a single cloud that

looked like a ring of feathery light somewhat triangular in its shape. Then they were gone from his sight...but only from sight, because in some form their presence remained—of that fact, Bill was positive.

Before the angels arrived, Gene Norman was walking along the spine of a ridge while looking down into the canyon where Bill was trying to flush out the herd of wild pigs. Gene couldn't see his friend at that moment, but he knew approximately where Bill was at. Gene kept his eyes busy searching the brush for some sign of movement, hoping to see any javelina that Bill might frighten into running his way. Suddenly Gene had the strangest feeling come over him, and he wept for no apparent reason. In a few minutes this strange feeling passed and his tears stopped. He was wondering what had just happened when—BOOM!—that blast startled him and caused his heart to pound rapidly from adrenaline.

The noise had sounded like it came from the sky directly over his head. Assuming it was a sonic boom,

he looked up. There wasn't an airplane in sight; nor was there any tell-tale sound of a jet engine roaring away into the distance. In fact, there were no sounds at all. But he did see something peculiar. He saw two streaks of vapor, or light, or something... They were miles apart and slanting upward. He had never seen anything quite like that before.

By now Gene had lost his interest in hunting. For some unexplainable reason he wanted to see Bill as soon as possible, so he walked in that direction. The terrain was rough, which meant he couldn't move very fast. He had to be careful that he didn't accidentally brush his shin against a cactus, which could stab him mercilessly with its needles. After nearly half-an-hour of walking he got to the spot where earlier he had seen Bill drop down into the canyon. Now he saw Bill hiking up the steep slope, coming towards him. Gene waved and shouted to get his attention.

When they met, Bill asked Gene, "Did you hear a noise like a great blast?"

"I sure did, Brother Bill. At first I thought it was a plane breaking the sound barrier, but there's no plane

up there. I've hunted out here for years and I've never heard anything like that before. What do you think it was?"

"I know what it was, Brother Gene; but don't ask me about it now. I'll tell you later."

Gene dropped the subject, although it stayed on his mind all afternoon and was still on his mind that evening while they were sitting around the campfire talking. Fred Sothmann had also heard the blast that morning and he brought it up.

Bill didn't want to talk about it, feeling that now wasn't the proper time or place. But he knew exactly what he must do next.

On Saturday morning the three hunters broke camp and returned to Tucson. In the wake of his awesome experience, Bill had completely lost his zeal for hunting, so he had used his upcoming trip to Jeffersonville as an excuse to cut their hunting trip short. Although Fred and Gene had neither one shot a javelina, that didn't bother them. They sensed something big was pending, and they were eagerly

anticipating the special meetings that would start in eight days. They both planned to be there.

On Tuesday morning, March 12, a caravan of four cars left Tucson bound for Jeffersonville, Indiana. Bill was riding with Gene Norman. The Sothmanns, the Simpsons and the Maguires followed in their cars.

Chapter 88

Breaking the Seals

1963

The Preamble—God in Simplicity

ON SUNDAY MORNING, March 17, 1963, William Branham stood behind a new pulpit in Branham

Tabernacle and began his series on the seven sealed mysteries of Revelation chapters 6 and 8. Before he preached, he dedicated the newly remodeled building to the Lord. A contractor had extended the northern wall by 30 feet and had faced the outside of the church with red bricks. The inside walls of the sanctuary were now covered with wood paneling. Some things had not changed. On the wall behind the pulpit hung a photograph—the same picture that had graced that wall since 1950. It was an enlarged copy of the photograph taken in Houston, Texas, showing the Pillar of Fire hovering over William Branham’s head. The floor of the sanctuary was lined with the same theater-style seats (individual, yet connected) that had been there through the 1950’s. Of course, now there were more seats; and each of them was occupied.

Bill said, “About 30 years ago I dedicated this piece of ground to Jesus Christ when it was just a muddy pond filled with water lilies. The lily is a strange flower. It is born in the mud and has to push its way up through mud, water, and slime to get into the sunlight and show its beauty. I think that is what has happened

here. Since that time when I was a young man, a pond lily has pushed itself to the top of the water, where it has spread forth its petals and reflected the beauty of the Lily of the Valley, Jesus Christ.”

He took his text from Matthew 11:25-26.

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.

Bill titled this sermon: “God Hiding Himself in Simplicity, Then Revealing Himself in the Same.” He said, “Many people miss God by the way He reveals Himself. Men have their own ideas of what God ought to be and what God is going to do. Men and women are always praising God for what He did, and always looking forward to what He will do, and ignoring what He is doing. That’s how they miss Him. They look back and see what a great thing He did, but they fail to

see what a simple thing He used to do it with. And then they look forward and see a great thing that is prophesied to happen; and nine times out of ten, it's already happening around them, and it's so simple that they don't recognize it."

Bill used John the Baptist as one example of this principle. Isaiah 40:3-4 prophesied that the man who would forerun the Messiah would be so powerful, he would flatten mountains, raise valleys, and improve every path leading to the Christ. Seven hundred years later a bearded man wearing a scratchy robe made from camel's hair stood by the Jordan River and preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." John lacked a formal education. He lacked money, prestige, and elegance in speech and manner; yet John the Baptist fulfilled every prophecy written about him.³⁵⁴ John's ministry was so simple that most religious scholars of his day failed to see God at work.

Then Bill moved to the greatest example of all, the coming of the Messiah to Israel. Jesus was born in a barn—not by chance, but by design. He was raised by

common people and learned the common trade of a carpenter. When He began His ministry, He walked from one village to another, healing the sick and teaching people about the Kingdom of God. Jesus owned His robe and sandals, and not much more than that. His life was so simple, yet He was the greatest gift God had ever given to mankind. Why couldn't the leaders of that day see Jesus was the Christ, the anointed of God? They missed Him because they were looking for something flashy, something spectacular that would fit the picture they had imagined from their misinterpretation of the Scriptures. They didn't understand that God interprets His prophecies by fulfilling them.

After the disciples realized their Master was indeed the promised Messiah, they asked Jesus, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus answered, "He has already come and they didn't know it. They didn't recognize him."³⁵⁵ Jesus was, of course, referring to John the Baptist, who had the spirit of Elijah upon him. Bill said, "I want to shock you a little

³⁵⁴ Malachi 3:1; Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 1:76; 3:4; John 1:23

³⁵⁵ Matthew 17:10-13; Mark 9: 11-13

bit. The Rapture will be the same way.³⁵⁶ It will come in such a simple way until the judgments will fall, and people will see the Son of man and they'll say, 'Weren't we supposed to have Elijah sent to us? And wasn't there supposed to be a Rapture?' Jesus will say, 'It's already happened and you didn't know it.' That is how God hides Himself in simplicity."

The Breach

ON SUNDAY EVENING, March 17, 1963, William Branham preached on the breach between the seven church ages and the seven sealed mysteries. The word "breach" means a gap or space, and refers here to the physical location of Revelation 4 and 5, which occur sequentially between the seven church ages in chapters 2 and 3, and the seven sealed mysteries in chapters 6 and 8. Chapters 4 and 5 describe the seminal event in heaven that makes the victory of the Christian church

³⁵⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: The term 'Rapture' refers to the catching away of the Bride of Christ before the great end-time tribulation that is coming to this earth.

possible. The Bride of Christ goes up to the wedding supper at the end of Revelation 3, and doesn't return to earth until chapter 19. Therefore, the Bride misses the great tribulation period. However, the events of Revelation 4 and 5 take place in heaven, which is outside the space-time continuum that affects events on earth. Keep in mind that it takes place in eternity.

In Revelation 4, John sees God sitting on His throne, surrounded by a vivid rainbow. As lightning and thunder crackled around him, God's visage sparkled with the beauty of precious stones. Around the throne stood four unusual creatures, each having six wings and many eyes. The first creature looked like a lion, the second like a calf, the third creature had the face of a man, and the fourth looked like an eagle. Around this great throne sat twenty-four elders on lesser thrones; and in front of the great throne burned seven lamps, which represent the seven spirits of God.

Bill read chapter 5:

[1] And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on

the backside, sealed with seven seals. [2] And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? [3] And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. [4] And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. [5] And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. [6] And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. [7] And he came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne. [8] And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four [and] twenty elders

fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. [9] And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; [10] And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

The book God held in Revelation 5 was not like the books we have today. It was a scroll, which is single sheet made from either parchment or papyrus.³⁵⁷ Although John doesn't tell us exactly how this scroll looked, if we examine ancient scrolls, we see that typically, upon completion, the writer would roll up the scroll into a tube for convenient storage. If it was a document written for a specific recipient, the leading edge was sealed with a drop of hot wax and a signet was pressed into the wax. Often the signet was a finger

³⁵⁷ Papyrus is a kind of paper made from reed-like water plants; parchment is made from animal skins.

ring with an engraved design. This method would keep the contents private until the scroll was opened by an authorized agent.

The book John saw had writing on both sides of the scroll. The outside contained the symbols he described in Revelation 6 and 8. The inside (when it was rolled up) contained the explanation of those symbols, that is, the revelation of the mysteries. How were the seven seals attached to the scroll? Nobody knows for sure. Perhaps the seals were fixed internally to ribbons that protruded from the side of the scroll as bookmarks. Perhaps there were seven sheets rolled up one inside the other, with each individual sheet banded with a ribbon and sealed shut with a drop of wax. Or it could be that a single scroll rolled up had seven drops of wax in a row across the exposed leading edge, sealing it to the body of the scroll (which was not uncommon for Roman documents at that time.) How it looked is not as important as how it was done, for the book was sealed by God's spirit. More precisely, each mystery was sealed by a different aspect of God's spirit, as

symbolized by the seven lamps in front of His throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

A seal represents a finished work. For example, the Holy Spirit is a seal on a Christian. The Holy Spirit seals the individual believer into the Kingdom of God until the day when his or her redemption will be completed.³⁵⁸ Another example is found in Matthew chapters 27 and 28. After Jesus was buried, Roman soldiers sealed the stone that covered the entrance into His tomb. Upon His resurrection, the angel of the Lord (God's authorized agent) broke that seal by rolling the stone away.

Bill taught that the scroll mentioned in Revelation 5 is the Book of Redemption. It is the abstract title deed to everything Adam lost when he sinned in the Garden of Eden. Originally Adam was given complete control over a perfect world. As the first son of God, he was like an amateur god over the earth. God also gave Adam the freedom to choose his own path. When Adam heeded his wife's reasoning instead of holding to God's Word, he forfeited his inheritance—that is,

³⁵⁸ Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; Romans 8:22-23

his right to eternal life. Death entered the world as God had warned him it would: “*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*”³⁵⁹

When Adam forfeited his right to live forever and rule a perfect earth, the title deed went back to the original owner, Almighty God, who then sealed it with seven seals to protect it so it couldn’t fall into Satan’s hands. The entire plan of redemption is contained within those seven sealed pages, waiting for the day when someone would take the book, break the seals and redeem mankind’s lost inheritance.

But God wasn’t idle while waiting for the day of redemption. Over the centuries He inspired prophets to write down portions of the plan of redemption; later these writings were collected into the book we call the Bible. Throughout the church ages godly men strained to understand God’s plan, with some degree of success. Yet they could never quite capture the full picture. Obviously, Jesus Christ was the key element

in this plan. His death and subsequent resurrection made it possible for God’s Spirit to come inside ordinary people and change them into sons and daughters of God. Other aspects of His plan were more elusive; such as the nature of God Himself, and the evidence His Spirit baptizing a believer—as well as many other doctrines. God promised to reveal the whole picture of His great plan in due time.

The verb “redeem” means to recover ownership by paying a specified sum. John watched as a search was made through time and eternity. Was there a man worthy enough to take that Book from God’s hand and break open the seven seals? None of the Old Testament patriarchs could do it—not Enoch, or Noah, or Abraham or Joseph. None of the Old Testament prophets could do it—not Moses, or Elijah, or Daniel, or John the Baptist. None of the New Testament apostles could do it—not Matthew, or Peter, or James, or John himself. None of the church age messengers could do it—not Paul, or Irenaeus, or Martin Luther, or John Wesley. Certainly there were heavenly beings (like angels and seraphims) who had not sinned. But

³⁵⁹ Genesis 2:17

the law of God stated that any redeemer had to be a near kinsman to the one who was enslaved.³⁶⁰ It looked like God would not find a man who was good enough and powerful enough to redeem Adam's lost inheritance. John wept bitterly because if no man could be found worthy enough to take the book and reveal the plan of redemption, mankind would be lost forever. Every man and woman would have lived in vain.

One of the twenty-four elders said, "Don't weep, John. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root and Offspring of David, He has prevailed." The verb "prevail" means—to wrestle with and overcome. (That is what Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane when He prayed until sweat like blood dripped from His body.³⁶¹ He was prevailing over His own human desire to avoid the cross.) John turned, expecting to see a powerful Lion. Instead he saw a Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes. Some of its white wool was dyed red by its own blood, as though it had sacrificed its life in its struggle to overcome. Yet it had

prevailed! Jesus had kept the Word of His Father in every detail. He was worthy to redeem what Adam had lost.

John had looked all around the throne room and he hadn't noticed this Lamb before. Where did it come from? It came forth from the Father's throne where it had been seated since it had been slain and raised again. When Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, He sat on the right hand of God and became a mediator, ever living to make intercessions on behalf of the saints. For seven church ages He would ask God to be merciful to them, because they were ignorant of the whole plan of redemption and were walking in as much light as they knew. But there must come a day when His duties as a mediator will end. When the last one of His elect receives the seal of God, there will no longer be a need for a mediator. Then Christ will move into His role as a judge.³⁶² The mercy seat will become a judgment seat.³⁶³ John watched as the Lamb took the book out of the right hand of the Person who sat on the

³⁶⁰ Leviticus 25, especially verses 47-49; Ruth 3 and 4

³⁶¹ Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46

³⁶² Revelation 19:7-9

³⁶³ The Ark of the Covenant, which sat in the Holiest Place of the Tabernacle, was a type of Christ Himself. The lid of that ark was called the mercy seat, meaning the place where mercy could be found. Exodus 25:1-22; Leviticus 16:2; Numbers 7:89; Hebrews 9:3-5.

throne. At this point Bill shifted the focus of his sermon to Revelation chapter 10. He read:

[1] And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow [was] upon his head, and his face [was] as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: [2] And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and [his] left [foot] on the earth, [3] And cried with a loud voice, as [when] a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. [4] And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. [5] And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, [6] And sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and

the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: [7] but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets.

This Angel who descends from heaven is none other than Christ Himself, identified as the Covenant Angel by the rainbow over His head. The book that He now holds open in His hand (verse 2) is the same Book that was closed in Revelation 5. When He swears His oath (verses 5, 6 & 7), He is swearing by Himself, for there is no one greater.³⁶⁴ He promised us that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel (that is, in the days of the message of the seventh church age messenger) the mystery of God will be finished, at least as much of it as has been ordained to be known this side of heaven.

In order to finish the mystery of God, this last church age messenger must also be a prophet. As the prophet

³⁶⁴ Hebrews 6:13-20

John the Baptist fulfilled the first part of Malachi 4:5-6, so this end-time prophet will fulfill the last part of that prophecy, restoring the faith of the children back to the faith of their apostolic fathers. There is a connection between these two prophets—a relationship of duties. John the Baptist was more than a prophet; he was also a messenger sent with a message to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah.³⁶⁵ John the Baptist identified Christ to those people who would listen. Likewise, the angel to the seventh church age will be a prophet-messenger whose message will identify Jesus Christ to those people who will listen, and thus prepare their hearts for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Bill said, “Although this Book of Redemption has been probed at through six church ages, it will not be thoroughly understood until the end, when the seventh angel begins to sound his mystery. He winds up all of the loose ends that these other fellows probed at, and then the mysteries come down from God as the Word of God and reveal the entire revelation of God. Then

the Godhead and everything else is settled. All the mysteries, like the serpent’s seed and whatever more, are to be revealed.

“I’m not making that up. It’s ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ I read it to you out of the Book—at the sounding of the seventh angel’s message, the mystery of God should be finished that has been declared by His holy prophets. (Those are the prophets who wrote the Word.) At the sounding of the messenger to the last church age, all those loose ends that were probed at through these church ages will now be wound up together. And when the seals are broken and the mystery is revealed, this Angel (*the* Messenger, Christ) will come down with a rainbow over His head, setting His foot upon the land and upon the sea.”

At the end of this sermon Bill mentioned the parable Jesus taught about ten virgins who went out to meet the Bridegroom.³⁶⁶ All of them took lamps with them, but only five virgins were wise enough to take oil for their lamps. When the Bridegroom was delayed, they fell asleep. At midnight a cry was heard, “Behold, the

³⁶⁵ Matthew 11:7-12; Luke 7:24-28.

³⁶⁶ Matthew 25:1-13

Bridegroom is coming; go out to meet Him!” The foolish virgins thought they had oil, but when their wicks wouldn’t light, they realized their mistake and rushed off to buy some oil. While they were gone, the Bridegroom arrived, and the wise virgins went in with Him to the wedding. The door was shut and locked so that the foolish virgins could not enter.

Bill taught, “While the ten virgins were sleeping, there came forth a sound, a voice, a cry. What happened? All those sleeping virgins arose and trimmed their lamps; and the wise virgins went in to the wedding supper, and the rest of them were left for the tribulation period—weeping, wailing, and gnashing their teeth.³⁶⁷ That’s the church that was left out, not the Bride. The Bride went in to the wedding supper. There’s a difference between the church and the Bride.

“Why are the seals broken? They are broken in the last church age to reveal these truths. Why? The Lamb breaks the seals and reveals them to His Bride in order

to collect His subjects for His kingdom. See? He wants to bring His subjects to Him now.

“And when the Lamb that was slain walked forward from eternity out of the Father’s throne and took His rights, the mercy seat became a judgment seat. Then He becomes—not a Lamb, but a Lion, King; and He calls for His queen to come stand by His side. As Paul wrote: ‘*Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?*’”³⁶⁸

Jesus Christ paid the full price for our redemption when He sacrificed Himself at Calvary. Hanging on that cruel Roman cross, Jesus cried out, “It is finished!”³⁶⁹ But He still must claim all those who are His purchased possession. When the last person comes into the fold of this Great Shepherd, then His great plan of redemption will be fulfilled.

The First Seal—Revelation 6:1-2

³⁶⁷ Matthew 22:1-14

³⁶⁸ 1 Corinthians 6:2

³⁶⁹ John 19:30

HAVING EXPLAINED the background of the heavenly throne room, William Branham was ready to approach the mysteries behind these seven seals on the Book of Redemption. Realizing the gravity of his responsibility, he planned to spend all week in seclusion. Early Monday morning he entered his study, prepared to remain there most of the day. The house was quiet because his wife was still in Tucson with their children, who had to attend school.

He began his task by reading Revelation 6:1-2:

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

“Well, what is it, Lord?” He asked, as he paced back and forth across the room. Then he knelt and prayed. After a while he picked up his Bible and read these

two verses again. What does it mean? He knew what some people said it meant. Recently he had read three books about the book of Revelation. These three books were written by distinguished theologians who all agreed on the meaning of the white horse and its rider. In the symbolism of the book of Revelation, a beast stands for a power. A white horse implies purity, holiness, and righteousness. Therefore, this white horse rider must be the Holy Spirit starting out in the first church age to conquer the world with the love of Jesus Christ. That sounded plausible. After several hours of praying about it, Bill didn’t have anything different on the subject, so he decided to study the first seal from that angle. Sitting down at the desk, he took his pen in hand, adjusted his notepad, and flipped open his Bible to look for Scriptures that could corroborate this idea. He was about to make his first note when the atmosphere in the room changed. He felt the Holy Spirit enter the room before he saw the Pillar of Fire hanging in front of him. The appearance of that supernatural light alarmed him, as it always did. He never got used to it. As he looked into that eternal

flame, he saw the first seal break and the scroll unravel that far. He reached for his pen and started writing.

On Monday night the doors of Branham Tabernacle opened at 6:30. Promptly at 7:30 Bill walked out of the pastor's study, stood behind the pulpit, and greeted his audience. After reviewing the breach, he plunged into the revelation of the first sealed mystery. When John saw the Lamb open the first seal, John heard the crackling boom of thunder. Simply put, John heard the voice of God. Bill proved this by using John 12:23-29, where Jesus prayed aloud, and a voice from heaven answered Him, but the people standing near Jesus said they heard it thunder.

Next, one of the four beasts around the throne proclaimed, "Come and see." Bill agreed with those theologians who said a beast in Revelation symbolizes a power. These four beasts—resembling a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle—represent the power of the four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Then he came to the white horse and its rider. He told about the theologians who described this rider as the Holy Spirit conquering the first church age with

the gospel. Bill said, "That sounds good, but it isn't the truth. My revelation by the Holy Spirit is this: Christ and the Holy Spirit is the selfsame Person, only in a different form. So here stands Christ, the Lamb, with the book in His hand; and there goes the white horse rider. So, it wasn't the Holy Spirit."

He continued, "That is one of the mysteries that will be revealed in the last days, how that Christ can be the three persons in one. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not three different people, as the Trinitarians try to tell us. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three manifestations of the same Person—not three gods, but three offices, or attributes of the same God. So, looking at the symbols, how could Christ be out there with a white horse, conquering, and yet still be standing here with a Book in His hand? It can't be. So, this man on a white horse isn't Christ."

If the rider of this white horse isn't Jesus Christ, who is he? Bill taught that the rider represents the antichrist spirit. The white horse is a disguise. The rider is pretending to be righteous in order to infiltrate the church. Jesus said that the false spirit would look so

much like the Holy Spirit that everyone would be deceived by its masquerade except the elect.³⁷⁰ Notice how this white horse rider has a bow, but he doesn't have any arrows. He's a bluff. He has no spiritual power. Satan uses deception to manipulate political power. He used the political power of the Roman Empire to kill Jesus. When that failed to stop the plan of redemption, Satan's next goal was to crush the infant faith of Christianity before it could spread. He succeeded in having most of the apostles killed, including Paul. He even inspired the Roman Emperor Nero to outlaw Christianity, which resulted in thousands of Christians dying for their faith. But Satan could not stop the gospel from spreading. So he changed his tactics and joined himself to the church. Presenting himself as a believer, he systematically perverted the words that Paul preached. His goal was to conquer the laity from the inside. Remember the teaching in the church ages, how God hates the deeds of the Nicolaitans.³⁷¹ The word *nicolaitan* means to "conquer the laity." Satan worked to remove the

leadership of the Holy Spirit from the church and replace it with the leadership of men. He influenced certain men to become bosses over the people. His long-range goal was to have one man be the boss over all the others. This plan didn't begin with deeds. It began softly as a spirit amongst the people—a spirit that leaned toward forming an organization. It went from a spirit, to a saying, and then to deeds. Gradually these deeds solidified into doctrines, and eventually these doctrines became the law when the Roman Emperor Constantine embraced Christianity and made it the official religion of the Roman Empire. To make this drastic change more palatable to all the citizens of his vast empire, he blended the doctrines of Christianity with elements of paganism, so that everyone could feel comfortable with this new religion. To administer this official state religion, Constantine organized the Roman Catholic Church. In the year 325 A.D. he held a council meeting at Nicea, Bithynia (which is present-day Turkey) where church doctrines were discussed and decided upon by voting from the assembled bishops. They agreed to believe in

³⁷⁰ Matthew 24:24; Acts 20:29

³⁷¹ Revelation 2:6

a triune God—that is, one God in three persons. They said that each person of the Godhead is co-equal with the other two. From that point the errors multiplied exponentially. Eventually, with the election of a pope as the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, Satan achieved his goal of having one man as the boss over everyone else.

The white horse symbolizes how innocently all this began. In one of John's letters, he tells the early church that the antichrist spirit is already on the earth.³⁷² From the beginning Satan desired to be crowned as a king and worshiped like God. But a spirit can't be crowned. When pagan Rome became papal Rome and a pope was crowned as a ruler of the Roman Catholic Empire, then Satan had a way to receive a crown. The antichrist spirit entered the pope, who became a false prophet teaching a false word. A succession of false prophets followed through history. The Roman Catholic Church became the great whore spoken of in Revelation 17, perverting the Word, polluting the world with her fornication, that is, her

antichrist doctrines. (Anything that is against the Word is antichrist, because Christ is the Word.)³⁷³ Eventually the great whore had daughters, who adopted variations of their mother's antichrist system.

By the time of the end, the false prophet becomes the Beast spoken of in Revelation 13. The Beast will take control of the world's economy during this last great time of trouble. (The Bride of Christ is gone during this time, caught up to the wedding supper of the Lamb.) This final pope will be a genius, a superman, who will temporarily save the world from political and economic disaster. The Roman Catholic Church will make a covenant with the Jews.³⁷⁴ The Middle East will appear to finally have peace. For a time this pope's policies will work so well that political and religious leaders all over the world will subordinate their authority to his leadership. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 Paul said that God will allow these people to believe the Beast's lie and their delusion will damn them. Revelation 13:8 says everyone will worship the Beast except those whose names are written in the

³⁷² 1 John 2:18

³⁷³ John 1:1

³⁷⁴ Daniel 9:26-27

Lamb's book of life. Finally, Rome will break her covenant with the Jews and the true nature of the Beast will show itself. No one will be able to buy or sell unless he or she has the mark of the Beast. The Beast will persecute and even kill those who oppose it. The remnant (the foolish virgins) will resist the Beast unto death. Bill said, "Remember, the antichrist and the Beast is the same spirit."

Summarizing the first mystery, Bill said the rider of this white horse represents three stages of the same satanic power (a demonic trinity, if you like.) First, he is the antichrist spirit, teaching Nicolaitan doctrine. He is antichrist because he is against the teachings of the first church age messenger, Paul. Second, he becomes the false prophet—a pope, teaching a false word; teaching the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, and discounting the Bible as God's highest authority on earth. Third, he becomes the Beast—Satan's power brought to perfection in the end-time and personified in a superman of guile and deception.

The Second Seal—Revelation 6:3-4

ON TUESDAY EVENING William Branham began his sermon with a review of the previous sermons in this series, and then he presented background information for his current topic. He drew the attention of his audience to the order of the events in the first four sealed mysteries. When the Lamb breaks a seal, one of the four beasts around the Father's throne makes an announcement in heaven. The events in each seal, once begun, run on to the end. As the mystery unfolds, the church age messenger catches the spirit of the revelation and proclaims it to the church age. It starts a spiritual war that ends with a temporary judgment when the revelation for that age is rejected by the majority of people on earth at the time. Remember, the truth Paul established in the first church age was subsequently diluted by false teachers. Because the middle church age messengers were reformers, and not prophets, they did not fully understand the Word they were trying to restore. They left a lot of loose threads dangling in the fabric of their

theology. According to Revelation 10:7, the seventh church age messenger will collect these loose threads of doctrine and explain them to the church. The majority of people in the end-time will reject this last messenger, bringing on the final judgment. But a few will listen and receive his message.

Halfway through his sermon, he read Revelation chapter 6, verses 3 and 4:

And when He had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword.

After reading the second seal, Bill explained his revelation. The rider of this red horse is the same one who was riding the white horse. It is Satan again, just changing horses, that is, changing the form of his attack against the true church. Satan is the head of all

national politics.³⁷⁵ He manipulated church politics and national politics, trying to create a platform in the Roman Empire that would allow a false prophet to gain control of the church. Satan finally accomplished this at the Nicean Council in 325 A.D., where church and state combined, planting the seeds that would grow into the Roman Catholic Church. Once the church had political power, it could force its dogmas on the population, and it could persecute, and even kill those who disagreed with its dogmas. The red horse symbolized the blood of the Christian martyrs who would die under the sword of the first false prophet (Damasus, 304 to 384 A.D.), and subsequent false prophets, who were the popes, cardinals, and bishops of a mock Christian church.

To clinch this point, Bill referred to Hazeltine's history of the Christian church, *How Did It Happen?* He noted how Saint Augustine of Hippo, the famous fourth century Catholic bishop, had an opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit, but rejected it.³⁷⁶ Many years

³⁷⁵ Matthew 4:8

³⁷⁶ William Branham's statements about Saint Augustine of Hippo (The Second Seal, 63-0319, 215 {287-289}) came from *How Did It Happen?* by R. Hazeltine, 1958, pages 278-287. William Branham mentions the book Schmucker's *Glorious Reformation*, so

later, the pope in Rome instigated a murderous persecution on anyone who was caught reading the writings of Origen. (In the third century, Origen wrote widely circulated letters exposing the corruption that was creeping into the church.) A magistrate in Italy wrote to Augustine to ask him if he thought it was right to kill these people simply because they were reading the works of Origen. Augustine replied, “It is much better that some should perish by their own fires, than that the whole body should burn in the everlasting flames of Gehenna [hell], through the desert of their impious dissensions.”

Subsequent Roman Catholic leaders used Augustine’s statement to justify their murderous acts. The Roman Catholic Church formulated a doctrine of persecution which they justified by distorting the lesson Jesus taught in Luke 14:16-23. In this Scripture

it looks like he is quoting Schmucker, but actually he is quoting Hazeltine, who was quoting Schmucker. St. Augustine’s part in the great persecutions of evangelical Christians is real, but that is not because Augustine was directly involved in the murders. Rather it is because later Roman Catholic leaders used his words and his reputation as an excuse to kill dissidents. In fact, Augustine may not have written all of the harsh statements attributed to him. Orosius, one of his students, who was a staunch supporter of the pope, may have inserted some of these murderous statements into Augustine’s writings, according to R. Hazeltine. (The book, *How Did It Happen?* is contained in the Message Software Package.)

Jesus told a parable about a rich man who invited people to attend a banquet. When many people refused the invitation, the rich man told his servants to fill his house, even if they must compel people to come to his banquet. The Roman Catholic Church interpreted this parable to mean: If people will not come into the first Roman Church by invitation, then the church could compel them to come in by any method that works, no matter how drastic.

In 380 A.D. the Roman Emperor Theodosius issued his first edict: “...let us believe in the one Godhead of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, of equal majesty in the Holy Trinity. We [referring to Pope Damasus of Rome, Bishop Peter of Alexandria, and himself] order that the adherents of this faith be called Catholic Christians; we brand all the senseless followers of the other religions with the infamous name of heretics, and forbid their conventicles³⁷⁷ assuming the name of churches. Besides the condemnation of divine justice, they must expect the heavy penalty which our authority, guided by heavenly

³⁷⁷ Conventicle – a secret or unauthorized meeting, esp. for religious worship.

wisdom, shall think proper to inflict.” This edict opened the last gate, allowing that blood-red horse of the second seal to roam freely over the earth and through the centuries. Its demonic rider would use his sword to kill millions of people who opposed his plan. Schmucker, in his book *The Glorious Reformation*, states that by the year 1850, the Roman Catholic Church had killed at least 68 million people who dared to resist their dogma. As the symbols of the second seal show, Satan has the power to take peace from the earth.

Revelation 17 describes the Roman Catholic Church as a prostitute who is riding a scarlet colored beast. The inhabitants of the earth become drunk from the wine of her spiritual fornication. This ill-famed woman also becomes drunk from drinking the blood of the Christians she has killed. In the book of Revelation, a woman symbolizes a church. Revelation 17 says this disreputable woman is that great city, founded on seven hills, which reigns over the kings of the earth. The only city that fits this description is Rome; and the only church that rules all over the

world from such a location is the Roman Catholic Church.

Jesus said, “All who take the sword shall perish by the sword.”³⁷⁸ The Roman Catholic Church used a physical sword to enforce its rule through the centuries. But the Bible also speaks of a spiritual sword that will finally destroy Satan and his dominion on earth. When Jesus Christ returns, out of His mouth will come a sharp sword through which He will strike the nations.³⁷⁹ The Word of God is that spiritual sword which will ultimately prevail. Hebrews 4:12 says: “For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword...”

The Third Seal—Revelation 6:5-6

RISE EARLY Wednesday morning, Bill prayed, and then read the third seal:

³⁷⁸ Matthew 26:52

³⁷⁹ Revelation 19:13 and 15

And when He had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

Before daylight came through the window, the Holy Spirit came into that room and broke the seal guarding that third mystery. Bill spent the rest of the day praying and searching his Bible for supporting verses.

On Wednesday night he taught that the same rider who previously rode the white and red horses, changed horses yet a third time. The black horse symbolizes the darkness of spiritual ignorance. For many centuries the Catholic Church dominated the spiritual thinking of most people. The Catholic Church said its doctrine was divinely sent from God. The uneducated masses had no way to verify this claim because few people had access to the Bible. These were dark years for the

true Christians. Through the middle centuries of the church ages the elect seed of God held on to their faith by the thinnest of margins; sometimes by just a nagging feeling in their souls that told them something was spiritually out of balance.

This imbalance is symbolized by the balance scale, which the rider carried in his hand. A balance scale is a weighing instrument consisting of a horizontal beam that has a central pivot-point. Identical pans hang from each end of the beam. When the pans are empty, the beam is perfectly horizontal. A known weight is used as a standard and placed in the pan on one side of the beam. When an object of unknown weight is placed in the opposite pan, it is then compared to the weight of the standard. Weights are added or subtracted to the standard side of the scale until both sides balance perfectly. This method can accurately determine the weight of any object. However, the accuracy of the measurement depends on the reliability of the standard weights used. An incorrect standard means incorrect results.

If the Roman Catholic Church had used the Bible as their standard, these dark years would not have happened. The Bible and the church would have balanced. But the Roman Catholic Church chose to use the judgments and edicts of their popes as their standard. They did this because it gave church leaders more control over the common people. This is symbolized by the selling of wheat and barley, which are staples of life.

Once the Roman Catholic Church had established their pope as the supreme authority, they developed their traditions, such as novenas, penances, indulgences, mass, and purgatory, none of which has any Scriptural basis. They also crafted their creeds. Trying to give their creeds legitimacy, they gave them names like “The Apostles’ Creed.”³⁸⁰ But the apostles never said anything that is in that Creed. If the apostles

³⁸⁰ Here is the Apostles’ Creed as recited in the Roman Catholic Church: “I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day he arose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.” (Source: World Book Encyclopedia, 1976 edition.)

had any creed at all, it was the one spoken by Peter on the day of Pentecost, “Every one of you must repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins; and then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”³⁸¹ That is what all the apostles preached. They knew Peter had the keys to the kingdom of heaven.³⁸² Repentance and baptism in Jesus’ name unlocks the door. (Jesus said, “I am the door...”)³⁸³

As the rider on the black horse begins his ride, it is a dark time for the children of God. The Bible says the only way a man or woman can live forever is through faith in Jesus Christ.³⁸⁴ The Catholic Church muddled this simple plan for salvation by mixing in works, like church attendance, confessions to priests, penances, prayers to Mary and other dead saints, and a host of other conditions and requirements. With limited access to the Bible, how could genuine believers see the truth? God has an answer. A voice comes from the midst of the four beasts that surround the throne. It is

³⁸¹ Acts 2:38

³⁸² Matthew 16:19

³⁸³ John 10:1-9

³⁸⁴ Ephesians 2:8; John 14:6; Acts 2:38-39.

the voice of the Lamb, saying, “*See thou hurt not the oil and the wine.*” The oil symbolizes God’s Holy Spirit.³⁸⁵ The wine symbolizes the stimulation of the revelation that God’s spirit brings. When the Holy Spirit shows someone that Jesus is the Christ, this revelation stimulates the believer more than natural wine. Consider the Samaritan woman who met Jesus at Jacob’s well.³⁸⁶ When she realized Jesus was the Christ, she was so stimulated that she ran into town and told everyone she knew, even though it was not socially appropriate for her to do so in that culture. The Book of Acts gives more examples.³⁸⁷ When the Holy Spirit filled 120 people on the day of Pentecost, they burst into the street and told everyone they could about Jesus Christ. These 120 people were so stimulated from their revelation that some onlookers thought they were drunk from new wine. That is the power of the revelation that built the church. When the Lamb said, “*Hurt not the oil and wine,*” He meant —“Hurt not the revelation of who I AM. Don’t

extinguish this revelation completely. There is a minority of people who still have it. Satan, you may persecute their bodies, but don’t kill that revelation. It is a seed. Although now it seems to be buried in the ground, eventually it will sprout and grow. I will restore everything that the palmerworm, locust, cankerworm, and caterpillar ate. These four destroyers spoken of in Joel 1:4 and Joel 2:25 are analogues to the four horses ridden by Satan in Revelation 6.

The Fourth Seal—Revelation 6:7-8

WILLIAM BRANHAM reminded his audience that the Book of Redemption was planned and written before God created the world.³⁸⁸ Brooding in His thoughts, God envisioned His creation and foresaw its corruption by Satan, that evil angel who lusted to be equal with God. Before there was a single hydrogen atom, God chose His Bride and decided to sacrifice the Lamb, thus ensuring the redemption of His chosen

³⁸⁵ Leviticus 8:12; Zechariah 4:12; Matthew 25:4

³⁸⁶ John 4:1-30

³⁸⁷ Acts 2:1-40; Acts 10:34-48; Acts 19:1-7

³⁸⁸ Ephesians 1:4; Hebrews 4:3; 1 Peter 1:18-20; Revelation 13:8; 17:8

people. Satan has labored tirelessly to foil this plan of redemption, but God will not be outmaneuvered.

Why does God open these seven sealed mysteries? He does it to show His Bride how much He loves her, and what He has done for her sake. When Eve fell away from God's Word, God promised He would bring His children back to that original Word.³⁸⁹ While His children were waiting for the original Word to return, God gave Israel a substitute—a system of atonement composed of rituals and animal sacrifices. But the blood of animals only covered the sinner; it didn't remove the desire to sin. Nevertheless, Israel grew to like this substitute. When God's Word came to earth incarnated in the man Jesus Christ, the nation of Israel preferred the substitute over the real thing. They didn't recognize the Word living in front of them. Jesus was the original Word of God wrapped in a package of a genuine man—skin, bones, muscles, nerves, blood, mind, personality and all. Jesus Christ came to earth for one purpose—redemption. When the Jews demanded that Pilate crucify Jesus, they

unwittingly fulfilled the plan that God had devised before the world began. Jesus, the original Word, became the sacrificial Lamb of God that could completely cleanse a person from sin. He proved this when He resurrected.

Bill said this cleansing from sin is like a drop of ink that falls into a barrel of bleach. The drop of ink will dissolve into its chemical components so that nothing of the original compound remains. Bill said, "Every born again believer (true believer) is perfectly, absolutely sinless before God. He is not trusting to his own works, and the blood of Jesus (that his confession has dropped into) dissolves every stain. The Bible says, 'He that is born of God does not commit sin, for His seed remains in him, and He cannot sin.'³⁹⁰ How can you make someone a sinner when the bleach of the blood of Jesus Christ is between that person and God? Jesus said, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as Your Father in heaven is perfect.'³⁹¹ How could we even start being perfect? Yet Jesus required it. If He

³⁸⁹ Genesis 3:15

³⁹⁰ 1 John 3:9

³⁹¹ Matthew 5:48

required it, He has to make a way for it to happen; and He has—through His own blood.”

After preaching for about an hour, Bill finally came to his main topic for that night. He read Revelation 6:7-8:

And when He had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

Bill explained how this pale horse carried the same rider as the three horses before it. The pale color of its hide symbolized a mixture of the white, red, and black horses, blending religious, political, and demonic powers in the last days. Notice how the mysterious rider remained nameless through the first three horses.

Now, on this pale horse, the rider is called Death. Hell followed him. Just as natural death is always followed by hell (meaning the grave,) spiritual death is always followed by hell (meaning the lake of fire, which will be an eternal separation from God.) The organizational system that Satan created and promoted as the truth, that system is actually a graveyard of spiritual death. Bill stressed that he was not against the people in those organizations; he was against the system that governed them and bound them to its errors.

While Satan was riding roughshod through the church ages, God was not sleeping. Isaiah 59:19 said: “*When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.*” The four living creatures guarding the throne of God are the same beasts that spoke to John at the opening of the first four seals. They represent the power of the four gospels—Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John—guarding the throne from the North, South, East, and West. Furthermore, they represent the power of God dispensed through the seven church ages in a specific

pattern in order to defeat Satan's attacks on the Bride of Christ.

The first living creature had the face of a lion, which showed the influence of Jesus Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, holding together His church in the first age by means of the fresh revelation of His Word. While Satan was trying to pervert the new faith, Christ inspired Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John to write their gospels, and He inspired Peter, James, John, and Paul to write letters that would establish the truth forever. The writings of these men were copied and distributed throughout the early church, giving Christians a tangible basis for their spiritual revelation of Jesus Christ.

The second creature had the face of an ox. Since an ox is a beast of burden, it is a fitting spirit to help the true Christians endure the oppressions and persecutions that occurred during the second and third church ages (The influence of the ox-like creature extended into the fourth church age. Just as the church ages overlapped, so these defensive spirits overlap each other.) The ox is also a beast of sacrifice. The

spirit of this ox helped those Christians who had to give their lives because of their faith.

The third creature had the face of a man. This was an intellectual spirit, shrewd and calculating. God used this aspect of His nature to inspire Martin Luther, and other reformers to analyze the Bible; and in so doing, they threw off Rome's direct control. The invention of the printing press in 1440 and the subsequent translation of the Bible into common languages allowed more people to read for themselves what God said, and to compare God's Word with the doctrine and actions of the Roman Catholic system. Through the influence of this intellectual spirit, the elect of God turned away from Catholicism in the fifth church age, and continued to grow in their understanding of the Bible throughout the sixth church age. They did the best they could using their intelligence, but human reasoning could only take the church so far. As the centuries passed, interpretations of the Bible multiplied. Christian movements repeatedly fragmented and regrouped into an ever-growing array of denominations and cults, all of them based on the

Bible. Satan used this confusion to his own advantage, influencing many Christian leaders to get near to the truth, but twisting the truth just enough so that it was not the whole truth.

But God had one more beast/power waiting, held in reserve until the last church age in order to combat this confusion and prepare the church for Christ's return. The fourth creature guarding the throne had the face of an eagle. Because an eagle can fly higher and see farther than any other bird, it symbolizes the Gentile prophet who (filled with the spirit of Elijah) will preach at the end-time. One of his jobs will be to restore the original apostolic doctrines back into church.³⁹² He will not come from a theological college, because if he did, he would tend to drift back to what his teachers taught him. Like the original Elijah, he will stand against the organized religious systems of his day. It will be a difficult and lonely task. At one point, Elijah the Tishbite thought he was the only person left in Israel who had stayed true to God's Word. Then God told him that 7,000 people had not

bowed their knees to worship the perverted religious system that dominated the land.³⁹³ The end-time will be like that. Although there will be only one end-time prophet to the Gentiles, that same eagle-spirit in the last days will inspire some Christians to believe this prophet's message. Even so, they will be a minority—probably just one-hundredth of one percent of the world's population

Satan perverted the Christian church with an organizational spirit. When Martin Luther and the other reformers broke away from the mother organization, they had the truth for their time; but many of their followers kept that underlying organizational system that leads to death. This church system boasts that she is a queen, thus impersonating the Bride of Christ.³⁹⁴ A showdown looms ahead. Life and death—the two greatest forces in the world—will meet in battle. Satan on his pale horse of death will battle Jesus Christ on His pure white horse of life. The legions of Satan (those who believe in his system) will battle the armies of God. The pale horse rider now

³⁹² Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 17:11; Revelation 10:7

³⁹³ 1 Kings 19:9-18

³⁹⁴ Revelation 18:7

carries a sword, which represents all of the ways Satan can kill, both naturally and spiritually.

God will defeat Satan with the spiritual sword of His eternal Word. The false prophet, the Beast, and those who worship the image of the Beast will be defeated, and later they will be destroyed in the lake of fire.³⁹⁵ Therefore, hell cannot be eternal, because hell is eventually destroyed in the lake of fire. The Bible talks about those people who will suffer “eternal judgment”, the vengeance of “eternal fire,” and those who will be punished with “everlasting destruction.”³⁹⁶ The judgment, fire, and destruction are permanent, but the people who go through this judgment and destruction cannot be eternal. The only people who will live forever are those who have the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ living within them.

The Fifth Seal—Revelation 6:9-10

³⁹⁵ Revelation 19

³⁹⁶ Hebrews 6:2; Jude 1:7; and 2 Thessalonians 1:9; respectively

ON FRIDAY MORNING Bill rose before daylight, entered his study, and read Revelation 6:9 and 10:

And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

All the commentaries Bill had ever read on the fifth seal agreed that these people were Christians who had been martyred because of their faith. That sounded reasonable, given the imagery. Then the Pillar of Fire swept into the room, driving away the reasoning of

men. As Bill watched, transfixed by that supernatural light, a vision propelled him into another dimension. Seeing the souls gathered around the altar, he learned who they were, and who they were not. The vision expanded, showing him other groups, including the 144,000 Jews who will be sealed during the end-time tribulation. He saw the five comings of Elijah down through history. Four times he saw Elijah appear alone. Then Bill saw Elijah appear for the fifth and last time, preaching to the Jews during the final tribulation period, only this time he was not standing alone. Bill watched closely until he realized who was standing with Elijah.

That night in church Bill explained what he had learned. The seven seals are not strictly chronological. The first four seals are sequential in time; but the last three are not. There is some overlapping of the events described. The Bride of Christ goes up to the marriage supper after the third chapter of Revelation, and she is not seen again until the nineteenth chapter when she returns to earth with her Bridegroom, King Jesus.

Therefore the fifth and sixth seals don't pertain at all to Christ's Gentile Bride.

Notice that the first four seals are announced by four specific living creatures, but the last three seals are not. That is because the Bride of Christ is removed from the earth at the end of the fourth seal. At the same time God will remove His protective spirit from the church.³⁹⁷ That is why the anti-Christ will operate freely during the time of the sixth seal.

Who are these people that the fifth seal shows standing around a heavenly altar? They are not martyred Christians, as so many Bible teachers have supposed. They aren't killed for any connection to Jesus Christ; but rather, they are martyred for the "Word of God, and the testimony they held." These people are Jews who stayed true to the laws of Moses. This group contains all those Jews who were martyred for their faith between the death of Christ around A.D. 33 and the going up of the Gentile Bride (which is yet to happen). Notice, they were given white robes. (The Bride of Christ received their white robes when they

³⁹⁷ 2 Thessalonians 2:7

accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior.) Also note how this group asks for revenge, which is an expected response under the Law of Moses (where strict justice required an eye for an eye...) ³⁹⁸ A Christian would not seek revenge. Jesus taught His followers to love their enemies and forgive them. ³⁹⁹ These Jews were given white robes because God partially blinded their eyes to the truth so that the Gentiles could have an opportunity to enter the Kingdom of God. Romans 11:25 states that: “*blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.*” In Acts 15:14 Peter declared that God wanted to take out of the Gentiles a people for His name.

After the Bride of Christ is caught up to the great marriage supper, the people who are left on earth will endure the worst tribulation the earth has ever seen. During that time, 144,000 Jews will be sealed into the Kingdom of God when they accept the message of two witnesses. Although the Bible doesn’t name these two witnesses, Bill identified them as Elijah and Moses. Revelation 11:6 says: “*These have power to shut*

heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.” Elijah the Tishbite controlled the rains, and Moses smote the earth with plagues. ⁴⁰⁰ After Moses and Elijah left this earth, they appeared again and talked with Jesus on the mountain of His transfiguration, which suggests that both prophets still have a ministry to fulfill on this earth. ⁴⁰¹ During the tribulation period, these two witnesses will preach to the Jews the same message that the fourth Elijah preached to the Gentiles of the last church age. When 144,000 Jews recognize Jesus Christ as their Messiah, they will weep in remorse for having previously rejected Him. God will comfort them by explaining that it was all done for a purpose—so that Gentiles could be saved. The story of Joseph revealing himself to his brothers in Egypt during a famine in Canaan is a beautiful type of Jesus revealing Himself to the 144,000 Jews during the end-time tribulation period. ⁴⁰²

³⁹⁸ Exodus 21:22-25; Leviticus 24:19-20; Deuteronomy 19:16-21

³⁹⁹ Matthew 5:38-48; 6:12-15; 18:21-35

⁴⁰⁰ 1 Kings 17:1; 1 Kings 18; Exodus 7:19; Exodus 8-11

⁴⁰¹ Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36

⁴⁰² Genesis 45:1-15

Notice that Joseph's Gentile bride rested in the palace while Joseph revealed himself to his brothers.

The Sixth Seal—Revelation 6:12-17

ALL THROUGH THAT WEEK William Branham averaged only three hours of sleep per night. On Saturday morning he again rose before daylight and entered the room where he had spent the week in prayer and study. He read Revelation 6:12-17:

And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were

moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

During each day Bill stayed in his study most of the time. He ate his meals at the house of his next-door neighbors, Banks and Ruby Wood; or sometimes Banks would take him to a restaurant for lunch; but always he hurried back to his study. He didn't want anything to distract him from his purpose. Sometime in the middle of Saturday afternoon, the Pillar of Fire illuminated his study and carried him forward into a future where the earth groaned and shook like a

pregnant woman delivering her baby.⁴⁰³ When the vision left him, Bill felt so stunned that he could scarcely breathe. Rising from his chair, he walked outside and paced back and forth in his yard. The cool March air refreshed him a little; the familiar sight of his lawn and trees calmed him somewhat; the large, cumulous clouds overhead soothed him enough so he could finally go back to his study. He had seen such horrible things coming upon the earth that he knew he couldn't tell the people too much about it or he would frighten them unduly. But in that vision he had also glimpsed a beautiful new earth coming forth from the old. He thought, "Oh, God, they can't miss this. I ought to reach down in the audience and push them. Jesus, I know I can't do that. You said that no man can come to You unless the Father draws him."⁴⁰⁴ I have one consolation: You also said, 'All that the Father has given Me will come.'⁴⁰⁵

At the service that evening, Bill explained how the sixth seal unleashes judgment upon a sinful world that

rejected God's plan of salvation. The Gentile age is over. The Bride of Christ is gone from the earth at this time, caught up to the marriage supper. God turns His attention to the final redemption of the Jews. Moses and the fifth Elijah surface in Israel, preaching to the Jews the same message that the fourth Elijah (the seventh church age messenger) preached to the Gentile Bride. One hundred and forty-four thousand orthodox Jews will then receive Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

The sixth seal is an interruption in the functioning order of the natural world. It begins with a tremendous earthquake, followed by erupting volcanoes, nuclear war, and terrible plagues. Under the timeframe of the sixth seal occur the seven trumpets, the three woes, and the seven last plagues spoken of in Revelation chapters 8 through 17. All those Gentiles who rejected Christ will try to hide from His fierce wrath. It will be too late for them to repent. When God's mercy is spurned, there remains nothing left except to reap the consequences of His anger. The sixth seal reveals the extent of those dreadful consequences.

⁴⁰³ Isaiah 13:6-11

⁴⁰⁴ John 6:44

⁴⁰⁵ John 6:37; John 18:9

There is one more aspect of the sixth seal that is very important to mankind's future. Remember, these seven sealed mysteries altogether make up the entire plan of Redemption. The first four mysteries overlay the seven church ages, and show how God used the spirits of the lion-like, the ox-like, the man-like, and the eagle-like creatures to protect the Bride of Christ from the devil's attempts to destroy her. The blinded Jews of past ages receive their redemption under the fifth seal. Under the sixth seal, 144,000 modern Jews receive their redemption during the final tribulation. But the earth needs redemption too. When Satan lured Eve into sin, the results (Cain and his descendents) polluted humanity with political, moral, and religious corruption. After thousands of years have passed, humanity has now succeeded in polluting the natural world as well. The sixth seal purifies the earth itself.

Therefore, the sixth seal has a threefold purpose: (1) it purifies the Gentile church that is left behind after the Bride of Christ has gone up in the Rapture. These Christians are the foolish virgins of Matthew 25. By resisting the mark of the Beast, they will purge

themselves of their unbelief and will receive mercy at the great white throne judgment.⁴⁰⁶ (2) The sixth seal purifies the Jewish nation. This is further revealed in Revelation 7, and also under the seven trumpets and three woes found in Revelation 8, 9, and 11. (3) The sixth seal purifies the earth. This is expanded upon in Revelation 15 and 16, which tells how seven vials containing the seven last plagues will be poured out upon the earth. The sixth seal also includes the events of Revelation 17 and 18, the judgment and destruction of the great whore and her daughters, which are those satanic systems that tried from the beginning to thwart the plan of redemption by substituting bogus plans.

The two witnesses of Revelation 11 will control many of these judgments. For example, notice that after the initial earthquake, "*the sun became black as sackcloth of hair.*" In Exodus 10:21-23, when the Lord told Moses to raise his hand toward the sky, three days of darkness followed. This happened right before God delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt. Moses will again call for darkness in the last days, right before

⁴⁰⁶ Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-12

God delivers 144,000 Jews from spiritual blindness and they accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah.”

Questions and Answers on the Seals

ON SUNDAY MORNING, March 24, 1963, William Branham told his audience that he had never before worked as deeply in the realms of God as he had this week. Although his faith-healing services had produced an unparalleled number of miracles, these meetings soared far beyond healings and miracles. This week he saw the revealing of truth by the same spirit.

He had spent most of eight days in a single room, sometimes standing in the presence of the Pillar of Fire for an hour at a time. It was almost too much for him. The human mind can only endure a finite amount of strain. Not that he feared for his soul. He knew Jesus Christ had redeemed him forever. Nevertheless, the presence of Christ in the form of that light—the Holy Spirit Himself—gripped Bill with a holy fear

that numbed him into silence. Some of the things he saw in that room he dared not tell, lest it cause misunderstandings and send some people into fanaticism.

This morning he did not speak on the seventh seal, but rather, he answered questions people had written on paper and had turned in before the service began. He wanted all the questions to center around the six mysteries that were now revealed. Most of the questions were about the seals, but some people asked about other topics, like the nature of God, water baptism, marriage and divorce, hell, predestination, and the serpent’s seed.

One person asked about the fate of the foolish virgins after they miss the Rapture. Bill answered, “They will be martyred in the tribulation and will come up for their judgment after the Millennium, because the Bible said that the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were expired. Then there will be another resurrection. The just and the unjust will be judged by Christ and His Bride.”⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁷ Matthew 25:31-46; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; Revelation 20

Another person asked about the Elijah who will come to the Jews during the tribulation—will he be the literal Elijah of old, or will he be a modern man with the spirit of Elijah? Bill answered, “I don’t know. I’m inclined to believe it will be a man anointed with Elijah’s spirit, because the Bible said, ‘The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha,’ and Elisha did just like Elijah did.⁴⁰⁸ I can’t say for sure. I’m honest with you. I don’t know.”

Someone asked him if the opening of the first seal fulfilled 2 Thessalonians 2:3 and 4—the revealing of the man of sin? Bill answered, “Yes.”

The Seventh Seal—Revelation 8:1

ON SUNDAY NIGHT, March 24, 1963, William Branham reverently approached the mystery of the seventh seal. He read the first verse of Revelation chapter 8:

And when He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

That’s it. That is all John wrote about this vital seal which completes the Book of Redemption. There were no symbols. Although no one spoke or moved in heaven, John was distinctly aware of the passage of time. Bill explained there was silence in heaven because this seal must remain a secret. If Satan knew what lay beneath this seal he would try to pervert it just like he had always done in the past. To prevent that from happening, the seventh seal must keep its mysterious nature. Paradoxically, in that very silence lays a clue.

Bill noted some intriguing similarities between the seven seals and a talk Jesus gave in Mathew 24. Jesus and His disciples were walking through Herod’s temple. The disciples were commenting on the impressive architecture when Jesus told them the temple would be destroyed. Later that day His disciples asked Him about the sign of His coming and

⁴⁰⁸ 2 Kings 2:1-15

of the end of the world. Jesus answered by listing various things that must happen first. Bill showed how some of these events corresponded to the seven seals:

1. The first seal (a rider on a white horse, the anti-Christ spirit going forth) corresponds to Matthew 24:4-5, *“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceives you; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”*
2. The second seal (the same rider on a red horse, now taking peace from the earth) corresponds to Matthew 24:6, *“And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.”*
3. The third seal (the same rider on a black horse, now measuring out grain)

corresponds to Mathew 24:7a, *“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines...”*

4. The fourth seal (a pale horse with the same rider who is now named Death) corresponds to Matthew 24:7b-8, *“...and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.”*
5. The fifth seal (souls under the altar wanting revenge for being murdered) corresponds to Matthew 24:9-13, *“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name’s sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And*

because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

6. The sixth seal (horrible disasters and cataclysms during the Great Tribulation) corresponds to Matthew 24:29-30, *“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”*
7. Although Jesus mentioned the content of the first six seals, He did not say anything about the seventh seal except that it is a

secret. Jesus said, *“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”*⁴⁰⁹

Bill said, “All the host of heaven was silent for this half hour when this seventh-sealed mystery in the Book of Redemption was broke open. They were awed by it. Why? What is it? None of us know; but I’m going to tell you my revelation of it. As certain as I am standing on this platform tonight, I had the revelation that it’s in a threefold manner. With God’s help, I will speak to you of one fold of it. Here is the revelation: the mystery is lying behind those seven consecutive thunders rolling out.”

He was referring to the seven mysterious thunders of Revelation 10; those seven voices which John heard and understood, and yet was specifically told not to write about them; and that they would play an important part in the end.

Bill continued, “There was a reason that God let those seven voices thunder. We find that Christ, the Lamb, took the book in His hand and He opened that

⁴⁰⁹ Matthew 24:36

seventh seal. But, you see, it's a hidden mystery. No one knows it. That goes right along with what He said in Mathew 24—no one would know His coming; they also would not know about this seven-thunder mystery. So, you see, they are connected. That much we understand today. The rest of it is all unfolded, but this part is not unfolded. Sitting in my room I saw it unfold to these seven thunders. That's as far as we can go right there.

“We have in the completion here, by the grace of God, all the mysteries of the six seals that have been sealed up; and we understand that the seventh seal is not to be known to the public. The hour is not yet for this mystery to be known. Therefore, we're this far and the rest of it will be known right around the time Jesus appears on earth again for His Bride, or whatever takes place at that time. Until that time, let's pray and live good Christian lives, looking forward for His coming.”

Bill spoke at length about the many visions and visitations he had experienced leading up to this momentous night. As far back as 1955 there was the

vision he saw about three parts to his ministry (the three pulls,) followed by the vision of that mysterious tent or cathedral. Then there was the vision of angels that came last December, followed by a visitation of the “King's sword” in Sabino Canyon. Finally, there were those seven angels who visited him near Sunset Peak a few weeks ago. He concluded by saying, “Notice how the vision, plus the Word, plus the history, plus the church ages, all blend together perfectly. To the best of my understanding, and according to the Word of God, and the vision, and the revelation—the interpretation of the seven seals is ‘Thus saith the Lord’.”

Chapter 89

His Last Great Temptation

1963

DURING THE TIME William Branham was preaching on the seven seals, his brother-in-law, James Fletcher Broy, was involved in an accident. Before Bill left Jeffersonville, he went to pray for his brother-in-law. Fletcher Broy was a sad sight. He had started drinking when he was a teenager, and ever since then, alcohol had controlled his life. He got married and fathered two children, but his drinking problem eventually destroyed his marriage. Now he was basically a bum. Lately he had been staying out at the Wiedner's farm, sleeping in their barn in exchange for doing farm chores.

After Bill prayed for his brother-in-law, he said, "Fletch, I'd like to give you some money."

"Don't do it, Brother Bill. You can guess what I'd do with it."

"Then let me give you some clothes. I have a couple of suits over there at the parsonage. I don't need them. I'd like to give them to you."

"Don't do it, Brother Bill," He said, shaking his head pathetically. "I'd just pawn them and use the money to get drunk."

Seeing Fletcher in this sad condition reminded Bill of something he dreamed the previous October, around the time he preached in Jeffersonville on the "Stature of a Perfect Man." In that dream Bill had become a homeless bum, roaming over a dark, barren landscape. He had nowhere to go and nobody cared about him. It was cold outside. Shivering, he worried about freezing to death during the night. In the distance he saw a fire. He walked in that direction until he came upon a city garbage dump. The garbage was burning in two ditches that ran parallel to each other. Hundreds of homeless people slept in the strip of land between those two fires.

Bill stood on the edge of that strip of homeless humanity and looked for a place where he could lie

down and rest. He could not see any empty spots. His future looked hopeless. Then someone stood up and came to him. It was Fletcher Broy.

Fletcher said, “Billy, I’ll hunt you a place. You fed my children when they were hungry. Now I’ll help you find a warm place to sleep.”

Bill followed Fletcher, stepping over dozens of people until he came to a spot of earth just big enough to fit his body. As Fletcher walked away, Bill stared beyond the fires into the cold, dark night and thought, “How strange this is. At one time God Almighty let me lead His church. At one time He let me preach His gospel and see thousands of souls saved. Men and women came from all over the world to speak with me for a few minutes. And now I’m a bum who nobody wants. I’m so cold. What must I do?”

When he awoke, he wondered if his dream had some hidden meaning. Now, as he sat and talked to Fletcher Broy, he recalled his odd dream. He still couldn’t find any meaning in it, but the meaning would soon become apparent in the form of a lesson he had to learn...

Bill drove back to Arizona with Gene Norman. Bill did all the driving. He didn’t talk much during the trip, but when they crossed the Arizona State line, he started singing, and sang one Christian song after another until they got to Tucson. For the next couple of weeks he didn’t do much of anything. He was exhausted and a little depressed. After spending a week in the presence of seven majestic angels, coming back to the everyday world was like returning to a dull job after an exotic vacation—it was hard to bear. For one thrilling week he had stood, so to speak, on top of a mountain and watched Jesus Christ reveal Himself as the supreme deity who created all things for Himself. Christ showed how all things will ultimately fulfill His great purpose, which is to marry a people He collectively calls His Bride. Those seven spirits of God revealed secrets wondered about by saints in every century since the Bible was written. Descending from that mountain peak to juggle daily responsibilities was like rejoicing at a revival meeting and then going home to paint the house. The shift in his thinking was extreme.

Bill prayed every day, asking God to show him what he should do next. No definite answer came to him. It was disheartening. In April he preached twice in Albuquerque, New Mexico, once in Sierra Vista, Arizona, and once in Phoenix, Arizona. Then he took a vacation, traveling with Billy Paul north into British Columbia. Roy Roberson, Fred Sothmann, and Banks Wood joined them at Bud Southwick's cabin, where Bud led them on horseback into the mountains for a week of fishing.

On their trip home, the five men traveled through Canada in a caravan of two pickup trucks. Before they entered the United States, the caravan disbanded—Roberson, Sothmann, and Wood continued east on the shortest route to Jeffersonville, whereas Bill and his son turned south toward Arizona. After crossing the Canadian/U.S. border, they traveled about four more hours, then stopped in Helena, Montana, and got a motel for the night. At four o'clock the next morning, they got up, warmed up the pickup truck and rolled out of Helena before daylight. Bill drove first, so Billy Paul made himself a pillow out of his coat, wedged it

between his head and the side window, and promptly fell asleep.

Bill slumped back into the same melancholy that was bothering him before he took his vacation. He prayed, "God, why didn't You call somebody to this task who could have done it right? I'm sorry, Lord, but I've failed You. I can't get the people to listen to me." As the mountains, meadows, and fields passed his windows, he thought, "I've been preaching the gospel now for 30 years. For the last 16 years I've done nothing except what the Lord told me to do. I've tried to live so close to Him that I wouldn't go anywhere or say anything that wasn't His will. In every act Jesus Christ has proven Himself to be the same today as He was yesterday, and still the majority of churches don't want anything to do with me. Well, if they don't want to hear my message, they don't have to. I'll just quit the field. I'll go up into northern British Columbia and become a professional guide with Bud. I'll talk Meda and the children into going up there for a vacation, and once they're at the cabin, I'll say, 'I love this place so much, there's no need of us going anywhere else. Let's

just stay here.’ I’ll grow a beard and be a real mountaineer, fishing in the spring and summer, hunting in the fall and trapping through the winter.

“People tell me that I’m a prophet. I’ve never regarded myself as a prophet, but people keep telling me I am. Well, if I am a prophet, then I should live in the wilderness like Elijah and John the Baptist did. If God wants me to deliver a message to the people, I’ll drive back to civilization and preach it, but the rest of the time I might as well be fishing.”

The gas gauge on his pickup dropped slowly toward empty. About seven o’clock Bill pulled into a gas station in a little mountain town. After filling the tank, he parked in front of a restaurant and woke up his son for breakfast. Fifteen people were already eating in the restaurant, some of them sitting on stools in front of the serving counter, and the rest sitting in booths with high backs so that just the tops of their heads showed between booths. Bill and Billy Paul sat in a booth. While Billy Paul was pouring syrup on his pancakes, Bill noticed a rugged-looking man cross the highway, walking toward the restaurant. Soon he came through

the door, his black riding boots clicking on the floor as he walked over to the counter and sat down. Bill guessed the man was in his late fifties. He was dressed in blue denim overalls and wore a blue denim jacket. His black hat sat on top of an ample supply of white hair. His face was covered with stubbly white whiskers.

This stranger impressed Bill. He thought, “There is a real man. Not like some of these soft, lazy, pot-bellied easterners sitting around swimming pools in their shorts, smoking cigars. That fellow looks strong and rugged, like he’s living the kind of life God meant a man to live.”

The stranger at the counter had just ordered his pancakes when he must have had a tickle in his nose. He sneezed a mighty, bellowing “Ker-choo-ee!” without making an apology.

Bill nudged his son and said, “Billy, there is a man after my own heart. In fact, that’s how I’m going to be in the future.”

“Aw, daddy, you don’t want to be like that,” Billy Paul said, as he poked the last bite of pancake into his

mouth. In the booth next to them, two old men got up and wobbled over to the cash register to pay for their breakfast. Paul nudged his father and said, “Daddy, those two men look like you and Uncle Fletcher.”

It was true. Bill was shocked at the likeness. They did indeed look like he and Fletcher Broy, or rather how the two of them might look in 20 years. Only these two men looked like bums who had spent the night huddled around a campfire. Their clothes were threadbare and dirty. One man plunked down twenty cents for two cups of coffee and two donuts. Then they wobbled outside on feeble legs.

Billy Paul eyed his father shrewdly. “What’s the matter with you?”

“Nothing,” Bill said, meaning: nothing I can put my finger on and explain.

When they got back in their pickup truck, Billy Paul asked, “Do you mind driving again? I’m still sleepy.” A mile later Billy Paul fell asleep. Bill sped along the mountain highway at fifty-five miles per hour. When he was about twenty miles away from that last town, someone spoke to him—not something imagined in

his mind, but a real voice filling the air with vibrations contained between the four windows of his pickup cab. It was not Billy Paul’s voice. Besides, Billy Paul lay slumped against the door, his head cushioned by his coat, snoozing for every extra minute of sleep he could get.

The voice said, *“If you carry out your plans, you’ll end up like those two men you saw in the restaurant. You’ll become a bum, just like you were in that dream I gave you. Your wife will leave you. She won’t live up there in the mountains like that.”*

“Lord, I don’t want to end up like that, but I’m not happy with the way my life is going right now. I want to do something different. If You called me to be a prophet, why can’t I live in the wilderness like many of Your other prophets did?”

“Those were prophets of the Old Testament. You’ve been called to hold a much higher office than they held. For one thing, you have more gifts than they had. You’ve been called to preach the gospel and pray for the sick in the apostolic form. Why do you always wait for Me to move you? Where is your reward? Like

Moses, you are in danger of losing your feelings for My people and forgetting the task I have called you to do.”

A mile rolled by in silence. It started snowing. Bill switched on the windshield wipers.

“Billy,” He called. No answer. Raising his voice, he called again, “Billy!”

Sleepily Billy Paul said, “What do you want?”

“Were you talking to me a few minutes ago?”

“No. Why?”

“Somebody was talking to me. I thought it might be you.”

Billy Paul looked at him funny, and then closed his eyes again. Another mile rolled by in silence while Bill considered how close he had come to shirking his duty. Nevermore! He asked, “Lord, what does this mean?”

“Return to your ministry,” the voice said. “When I called you in the beginning, did I not tell you to do the work of an evangelist? I told you, ‘As John the Baptist was sent to forerun the first coming of Jesus Christ, so are you sent with a message to forerun His second

*coming’. John was more than a prophet. He was also the messenger of My covenant.”*⁴¹⁰

Bill’s mind choked with too many thoughts. As the fields and fence posts whizzed by, he gradually sorted out the meaning. How could Moses reach God’s people as long as he stayed isolated in the wilderness? He couldn’t. Moses had to go to Egypt to be effective for God. Bill realized that neither could he be effective if he moved to the wilderness. Again he thought about the vision he saw the day he laid the cornerstone in Branham Tabernacle. God showed him an orchard with two rows of trees, representing the Oneness and Trinitarian views of the Godhead. Bill stood in the gap between these two extremes, broke a branch from a tree in each row, and planted these branches near the cross. Instantly these branches grew so high they disappeared into heaven, and they rained upon him an abundance of fruit. Then God pointed him to 2 Timothy 4:1-5, commanding him to “*do the work of an evangelist.*” That same Scriptural text warned, “... *the time will come when they will not endure sound*

⁴¹⁰ Matthew 11:7-11; Luke 7:24-28

doctrine...” Bill could now see how this portion of Scripture applied to him. God was telling him to “... *make full proof of thy ministry.*” He must keep going, keep preaching, and keep teaching. Someone somewhere was going to hear him and believe the gospel.

As soon as he reached this conclusion, that voice said, “*Behold, I will give you an everlasting sign. Look westward.*”

Bill looked out his right side window at a group of mountains that dominated the west side of the highway. “I don’t see any everlasting sign about that.”

“Your name is written all over it.”

The cab of the pickup seemed excessively warm. Bill noticed his hands were sweating. He slowed down, and tried to study the peaks.

Billy Paul roused enough to ask, “What are you doing?”

“Something is happening, Billy. I know where my mistake is, and how I almost failed God.”

Suddenly the road and the mountains were superimposed by thousands of people—some blind,

some crippled, some diseased, or in other ways needy. In the background Bill could hear a perfect voice singing:

Unclean! Unclean! The leper cried in torment,
The deaf, the dumb, in helplessness stood near;
The fever raged; disease had gripped its victim.
Then Jesus came and cast out every fear.

When Jesus comes the tempter’s power is broken;
When Jesus comes the tears are wiped away.
He takes the gloom and fills the life with glory,
For all is changed when Jesus comes to stay.

As the vision faded, Bill pulled over to the side of the road and stopped. Rolling down his window, he studied the group of mountains west of him. There were two small peaks, then a larger peak, then a smaller peak, then another large peak, and then one last small peak before a final great mountain rose to

meet the clouds. Bill said, “Lord, I don’t understand what this means.”

“How many peaks are there?”

“Seven.”

“How many letters are in your name?”

“W-i-l-l-i-a-m M-a-r-r-i-o-n B-r-a-n-h-a-m—all three names have seven letters.”

“Notice how three of those peaks rise higher than the rest. They represent the first, second, and third pull of your ministry. If ever again you doubt your calling, come back to this place and remember what I’ve told you.”

Snowflakes fell through the open window, melting as they landed. Bill’s eyes were transfixed on that highest peak. Billy Paul sat up and rubbed his eyes. He said, “Daddy, look to the east.”

Turning his head to the east, Bill saw a garbage dump smoldering near the highway, sending up a light gray plume of smoke that soon blended into the darker gray clouds above. He trembled inside, thinking how close he had come to making a terrible mistake.

DURING HIS SOJOURN in Tucson, William Branham would often attend the Central Assembly of God church at 2555 North Stone Avenue, where Reverend Spencer Weddle was the pastor. Occasionally, Bill and Meda Branham would pick up Gene and Mary Ann Norman, and take them to church. One Sunday morning in May, Bill and Meda arrived early at Normans’ house, so Gene invited them to come inside and visit for a while before they left for church. Bill sat on a couch in the living room. Gene sat in a matching chair. Between them, lying face up on a coffee table was the May 17, 1963 issue of *Life* magazine, which had a picture of New York’s governor Nelson Rockefeller on the cover, smiling at his new wife, Happy.⁴¹¹ Gene picked up this magazine, opened it to the third page and let his finger glide down the table of contents until he came to:

Odd Sights at Heights

⁴¹¹ *Life*, magazine, May 17, 1963 (Vol. 54, No. 20)

Haunting photographs of a moonbeam
rainbow and a cloud ring too big to be true...

..... Page 111

Flipping through the magazine to page 111, he paused briefly to look at the color photograph of a rainbow taken at night in Hawaii. The descriptive text said that moon-made rainbows are hardly ever seen (let alone photographed) because they require rare atmospheric conditions to form them. The caption read: “Rainbow of Moonbeams...” Turning this picture over to page 112, Gene read the next caption: “...And a High Cloud Ring of Mystery.” This page contained four photographs of a single cloud taken from different locations in the state of Arizona. Three small black-and-white photographs were stacked in the lower right hand corner. A fourth picture dominated the rest of the page. This large color photograph showed the wispy lines of a cloud so bright that it looked phosphorescent against the dark blue sky. The caption called it a “ring”, but the writer used that word loosely, to indicate that there was a

large expanse of sky visible in the middle of the cloud. If the cloud had started out as a circle, it had now elongated into a more angular form. The cloud floated over a barren desert landscape. No other clouds were visible in the photographs.

Handing this picture to Bill, Gene asked, “Have you ever seen anything like this?”

Bill studied the picture a moment before saying, “I guess you noticed that it is in the form of a pyramid.”

Silently Bill read the caption under the picture. It said:

Hovering like a giant’s smoke ring, a great cloud appeared at sunset over Flagstaff, Arizona, last February 28 and set off a continuing scientific mystery. Watchers struck by the cloud’s odd shape and huge size, took pictures, like these four, at different times and from widely scattered locations in the state. Dr. James McDonald, a meteorologist at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics in Tucson, has been accumulating the pictures. Using

them as the basis for trigonometric calculation, he has made a startling discovery that the cloud was at least 26 miles high and 30 miles across—"a lot higher and bigger," he says, "than a cloud should be." The circle was too high to be made by a jet plane, and so far as Dr. McDonald can determine, there were no rockets, rocket planes or bombs being tested nearby that day. He hopes anyone else with pictures will lend them to him, for he would like some more clues about the cloud 26 miles up—no water droplets exist at that height to make a cloud.

Closing the magazine, he asked, "Brother Gene, can I have this?"

"Sure, Brother Bill, go ahead and take it with you."

Later that week Bill stood in his apartment and opened *Life* magazine to page 112, studying the pictures of a strange cloud that was too high up to be formed from water vapor. The page held four pictures of the same object taken from widely separated cities.

A narrow column on the right side of the page held three black-and-white pictures, showing the cloud as photographed from Prescott, Phoenix and Winslow, Arizona between 6:00 and 6:30 p.m. On the left side, filling two thirds of the page, was a color photograph of the same mysterious cloud taken from somewhere near Flagstaff, Arizona. All four pictures showed its ring-like characteristic—that is, a white, feathery circumference surrounding blue sky in its center, although it certainly wasn't round. The Winslow angle made the cloud look oblong, but the other three photographs showed that it was distinctly triangular in appearance.

It might have been a mystery to others, but Bill knew exactly what it was. He was looking at four photographs of a constellation of seven angels. These were the same angels that came to him near Sunset Peak on March 8 because after they told him the seven seals would be opened, he watched them rise into the stratosphere and form a cloud that looked just like this one shown in *Life* magazine. He read the explanatory paragraph again. It said this cloud was photographed

on February 28, which was eight days before he saw the same thing near Sunset Peak.⁴¹² That was scriptural because God often foreshadows His greatest works in the heavens before He does them on earth.⁴¹³ Also the location of the cloud seemed significant, since it had appeared west of Sunset Peak and he had seen the angels coming down from the western sky.

But there was something else about the large color picture of this cloud that called to him, something synergistic that at first he could not quite place. Then he heard that familiar supernatural voice say, “*Turn it right.*”

“I thought I was looking at it right,” Bill mused. He was holding the magazine upright in the normal manner. “Maybe that voice means: turn it ‘to the right’.”

⁴¹² There has been some misunderstanding concerning the photographing of the mysterious cloud over Arizona and the actual time when the seven angels came to Wm. Branham. In my “Endnotes and Sources” I explain why I have written this account the way I have, and why it seems to me to be the only explanation that covers all the facts that we have available. —Owen Jorgensen

⁴¹³ Exodus 13:21; 24:15-18; 34:5; 40:34-38; Leviticus 16:2; Numbers 9:15-22; 2 Chronicles 5:13-14; Psalms 19:1; 50:6; 97:6; Matthew 2:2; 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Acts 1:9; Hebrews 12:1; Revelation 1:7; 10:1-7

When he rotated the magazine a quarter of a turn clockwise, he was amazed to see the cloud become a silhouette of the head of Jesus Christ gazing down at the earth. The shading of the sky inside the ring showed the faint impressions of a face. He glanced from this picture in *Life* magazine to the painting of Jesus that was hanging on his wall, which was Heinrich Hoffman’s “Christ at Age 33.” He always kept a copy of that particular painting in his home to remind him of the vision of Jesus he saw in 1933. Hoffman’s “Christ at Age 33” looked more like Jesus than any other painting he had ever seen. Now, here was that same head of Christ painted by seven angels in the sky over Arizona—photographed, and printed in *Life* magazine for the entire world to see.

Much later he talked about this picture during a sermon he preached in Shreveport, Louisiana. He said, “Notice how Jesus Christ is wigged with a white angel wig to show how my message of Him being God is the truth. He is the supreme Judge of the universe, supreme Judge of heaven and earth. He is God, and nothing else but God. He is God expressed in human

form called the Son of God, which the Son was the mask. Our message is exactly right, identified by the Scripture, identified in service, identified by His presence, the same yesterday, today, and forever. Therefore those seven seals are the truth, brethren. You might disagree with them, but just sit down and study them with an open heart and mind, and let the Holy Spirit lead you.”

AFTER HIS CHILDREN got out of school in June, William Branham took his family back to Jeffersonville for the summer. His wife and children were admittedly homesick for their old home and friends. On Sunday, June 23, 1963, Bill preached “Standing in the Gap” at Branham Tabernacle, explaining how God had stopped him from quitting his ministry. He told his congregation: “I am returning to the field. I’ll obey God until death shall set me free. Let me insert this—I wanted to see Jesus Christ manifested without one flaw, and that has happened through my ministry of discernment. But be it known

to the church here and to the church hereafter: If God pushes a man through a pipe and he doesn’t move at all until God tells him, there is no faith connected with it. It was God pushing the man to something. It has built my ministry to a place where nobody can say one word against it. From henceforth, I must go out by faith. I will pray, and choose the best I can, and then go do it. We know that human beings can make mistakes, but God can make no mistake. Perhaps this is that great time coming that we’ve been looking for. Perhaps this in itself will bring to pass our tremendous victory in love divine. I know it takes the love of God to dash out there on the front line and stand in the gap for the people.”

The next week he preached four times at a Pentecostal camp meeting in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Friday night at the camp meeting he taught again on Matthew 12:42, where Jesus said, “...*a greater than Solomon is here.*”

This sermon put Solomon on his mind. On Saturday morning, as he drove northeast to Jeffersonville, Bill continued to think about that ancient ruler of Israel.

King Solomon, with his many wives and his peaceful kingdom, typed the reign of Jesus Christ during the final Millennium. Spiritually speaking, Jesus will have many wives (the genuine believers from all the ages.) Bill's thoughts drifted back to the very first marriage in the book of Genesis, then forward through the Bible until God revealed to him things about marriage and divorce that surprised him. Even after he got to his parsonage in Jeffersonville, he couldn't get this subject off his mind. He stayed awake late into the night thinking about it, wondering how the truth of it would affect his friends and followers. The Holy Spirit seemed to say to him, "*Preach on marriage and divorce, tape record your sermon, and lay it away.*" Nevertheless, when the sun rose on Sunday morning, June 30, 1963, Bill was not yet ready to preach on this subject.

Instead, that morning he preached a sermon he called "The Third Exodus." His text came from Exodus 3:1 through 12, where the Pillar of Fire met Moses in a burning bush and told him to return to Egypt and deliver the Israelites from slavery. When Moses said

he couldn't do it, God gave him a sign. Bill read: *And he [God] said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou has brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.* Bill paused in surprise, not realizing until that moment that God gave Moses a mountain as an everlasting sign, just as God had given him seven mountain peaks as an everlasting sign. Recovering his composure, he continued his sermon.

The word "exodus" means: a going out; a departure or emigration, usually of a large number of people. Historically, many groups have emigrated. Bill spoke about the three great exoduses where God, in the form of a Pillar of Fire, came down to call a people out of bondage and lead them to freedom. The first, of course, was a natural exodus. That is when Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, and into freedom in the land of Canaan. During that first exodus, Moses (a God-called prophet) was led by a supernatural sign of the Pillar of Fire, so the people wouldn't mistake who was really leading them. They started their

exodus by killing lambs and smearing lambs' blood on their doorposts, as a sign that they believed God would protect them from the death angel who was passing that night through the land of Egypt and killing every first-born male.⁴¹⁴ Bill stressed how the only place God will meet with a man or woman is under the shed blood of a lamb. It was that way in Eden after the fall, and it has never changed. The only place God met someone in the days of ancient Israel was under the blood of a sacrificial lamb. But that was only a natural type of something spiritual that was coming. Jesus Christ fulfilled that type. Today, the only place God meets someone is—not in denominations, *churchianity*, or intellectualism—but under the sacrificial blood of the Lamb of God. Every believer has eternal life only under the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. That is where believers can have fellowship.

The second exodus was spiritual. Jesus (the God-prophet) called people out of a religious system that the Jews had developed around the commandments of Moses. Jesus called the weary to enter into His rest.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁴ Exodus 12

⁴¹⁵ Matthew 11:28-30

He is the Promised Land for the believer. He said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.*”⁴¹⁶ Jesus knew that He came from God and would return to God.⁴¹⁷ After the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, a man named Saul of Tarsus was traveling to Damascus when he saw the same Pillar of Fire that appeared to Moses. Because Saul was well trained in the Hebrew Scriptures, he said, “Lord, who are You?” The Pillar of Fire replied, “I am Jesus.”⁴¹⁸ The second exodus began. Similar to the first exodus, this second exodus was begun by the appearance of the Pillar of Fire. Just as God used Moses to lead the first exodus, He used the apostle Paul to lead the second exodus.

Bill said, “God promised there would be a third exodus in the last days. By scientific proof, and by the works and witness of the Spirit, we see it today—the great Pillar of Fire moving among us, with signs and wonders of the resurrected Jesus Christ, calling people

⁴¹⁶ John 14:6

⁴¹⁷ John 13:3

⁴¹⁸ Acts 9:5; Acts 26:15

from denominationalism into the presence of Jesus Christ; to go into a better land and live.

“Friends, I’m just your brother. Don’t believe it just because I’m saying it; believe it because God has proved it to you. The same Pillar of Fire He used for the other two, He has brought it among you today and proved it scientifically. As you know, *Life* magazine carried a picture of it last month.”

That evening he preached “Is Your Life Worthy of the Gospel?” He showed how worthiness doesn’t come from what you do; it comes from your faith in what Jesus Christ did for you. In an earlier sermon he said, “If there is one thing that I have to do, Jesus Christ died in vain. By grace I am saved;” meaning, of course, the grace that comes through faith in Christ.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁹ Ephesians 2:7-8

Chapter 90

Sermons like Thunder

Summer 1963

TRUE TO HIS WORD, William Branham delivered his major doctrinal sermons in Jeffersonville, where his congregation loved him enough to sit through two, and sometimes even three hours of preaching for one service. Bill would not have preached such lengthy sermons if he wasn't tape recording these messages for posterity. He felt compelled to store up spiritual food, believing that God would distribute it in the proper season, according to His master plan.

On Sunday morning, July 7, 1963, Bill preached "Indictment." He opened his sermon by reading the 33rd verse of Luke 23: "*And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.*" From this reading he took four

words as his text: *There they crucified Him. There—the holiest place in the world; they—the most religious people in the world; crucified—the most horrible form of death in the world; Him—the holiest man in the world.* How could it have happened?

In Acts 2:22-23 Peter indicted his generation, saying "*Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*" Drawing a parallel between that day and today, Bill said, "I am bringing an indictment against the churches of today. I'm not bringing the sinner into this; I'm speaking this to the church. I indict this generation for the second crucifixion of Jesus Christ." Impossible, you say. Jesus can't be crucified again. Hebrews 6:4-6 says He can. "*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the*

world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.”

Look at what happened back there in the first century. Luke said: *There* they crucified Him. Why was Jerusalem the holiest place in the world? There stood the temple; and there stood the altar where Levitical priests sacrificed bulls, goats, lambs, and doves to atone for the sins of the people. Remember the Bible’s teaching on this—there is only one place God will ever meet a worshiper and that is under the shed blood of an innocent sacrifice. The blood of those natural lambs was good up to the very hour that Jesus, the Lamb of God, died. At that precise second, it changed. Instantly the old system became antiquated, replaced by a new and living way—faith in the blood of the resurrected Son of God. Yet the Jews continued blindly on with their old system, oblivious to the change. Bill said, “The churches are doing the same thing today. Until the hour that organized religion is condemned and proved to be sacrificing Christ’s

Word, from then on comes the Word and the Word only. On the day of the crucifixion, the old Pascal lamb passed away, and Christ became our Lamb. And the day that the denominations crucified the Word of God and accepted a creed instead of the Word, that’s the day the Word came into full effect. That has just been recently” (meaning three months ago during the opening of the seven seals.)

There *they* crucified Him. Who were they? *They* were the best trained Biblical scholars of that time. If anyone should have known better, it should have been those Pharisees, Sadducees, priests, and rabbis. They were the ministers and clergymen of that day. It was their duty to lead the people to the truth. What a contradiction! They claimed to worship God, and yet they crucified the very God they claimed to worship. Isn’t the same thing happening today? Ministers who ought to know better are condemning the Word from their pulpits, saying, “It is fanaticism; stay away from it.” In doing so, they are crucifying Jesus Christ in 1963, and are just as guilty as those people in Jesus’ day.

There they *crucified* Him. First they mocked Him and beat Him privately. Then they stripped all His clothes off and hung Him on a cross for public humiliation. Bill said, “That is the same thing they’ve done today with their creeds. They stripped the goodness and the clothing of the gospel away by trying to place it in some other age, and by so doing, they’ve hung Him on a cross again.”

Why did they crucify Jesus? Jealousy and prejudice drove them to it. Consider His trial. What were the accusations they brought against Him? They condemned Him because He broke the Sabbath and because He made Himself God. (He was God; and He broke the Sabbath because He was Lord of the Sabbath.) Back then they found fault with the man who was the Word. Now they find fault with the Word working through a man. How did those disciples know Jesus was Christ? They knew because His works proved who He was. The same thing applies now.

Bill said, “I indict this bunch of ordained ministers. With their denominational creeds they are crucifying to the people the very God they claim they love and

serve. I indict these ministers in the name of the Lord Jesus, because they claim that the days of miracles are past and that water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is not right. Because they substitute creeds for the Word, I indict them for crucifying the Lord Jesus a second time. They have the blood of Jesus Christ upon their hands. They are crucifying Christ to the public, taking from people the thing that they’re supposed to be giving to them, and substituting something else in its place—all for popularity and a meal ticket.”

There they crucified *Him*. Jesus Christ was the manifestation of God in a body form to reflect the Word of God for that age, to make that age see God’s promise. And the Holy Ghost is the same thing today. It is the spirit of God upon the written Word, trying to find somebody to dwell in so it can reflect itself to this age, to prove that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.⁴²⁰ Jesus said, “*He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.*”⁴²¹

⁴²⁰ Hebrews 13:8

⁴²¹ John 14:12

People don't realize that by rejecting any part of the Word, they are rejecting Christ, because He is the Word. So many Christians take a Catholic spawned baptism using titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and reject Peter's command to "*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.*"⁴²² How can a Christian woman cut her hair after she learns that the apostle Paul condemned it?⁴²³ How can a Christian woman wear pants, when the Bible says it's an abomination unto the Lord for a woman to wear a garment that pertains to a man?⁴²⁴ These are just a few items among many. When religious people reject part of the Word, they have a "form of godliness, but deny the power thereof."⁴²⁵

"Therefore," Bill said, "I indict this bunch of clergy today. I indict this generation in the name of Jesus Christ, under the authority of God's Word: you are crucifying Him again. By elevating your creeds, you

are crucifying the Word so that it doesn't have the effect it is supposed to have on people."⁴²⁶

In the end, he presented the same solution that Peter gave so long ago. Bill said, "I call for this generation to repent and come back to the truth of the Word. Come back to the faith of our fathers. Come back to the Holy Ghost, because God cannot change. When He said, 'These signs shall follow those who believe,' He has to stay with that through eternity."⁴²⁷ It is His Word."

His closing prayer revealed an empty vessel, having poured himself out for the people, now weary and tender before the Lord. "God," He prayed, "may many people find their way back to Your Word, which is the only way of life. Father, You know I didn't say these things to be cruel. I said them in love. I pray, God, these people will understand that and receive correction. When You hung on Your cross, You prayed, 'Father, forgive them; they're blind and don't understand what they're doing.'⁴²⁸ I pray for those ministers today who are crucifying the Word again by

⁴²² Acts 2:38

⁴²³ 1Corinthians 11:5-15

⁴²⁴ Deuteronomy 22:5

⁴²⁵ 2 Timothy 3:5

⁴²⁶ Mathew 15:1-9

⁴²⁷ Mark 16:17-18

⁴²⁸ Luke 23:34

taking their creeds and denominational teachings, and substituting those things for the Word of Life; and then criticizing the truth that You are vindicating—I pray for those ministers and their congregations that You will call them to the marriage supper again. This time may they come, and not find excuses.

“I pray, God, that everywhere these words fall (those present and those who hear it on tape) that the Holy Spirit will call every person who is predestinated from the foundation of the world when their name was put on the Lamb’s Book of Life. May they hear the voice of God speaking today—that still, small voice down in their hearts saying, *‘This is the way, walk ye in it.’*⁴²⁹ Grant it, Father. I ask it in Jesus’ name.”

On July 17, 1963, Bill explained his motivation in a sermon he called “Paul, A Prisoner of Christ.” When Paul wrote to Philemon, he used this phrase as his salutation. Although Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter, he wasn’t referring to his physical location. He meant he was a prisoner to the words of Jesus Christ, because Christ is the Word. Love bound Paul to

Jesus Christ his Savior—a love so deep that Paul could only do what the Spirit of Jesus told him to do. The same can be said of every man and woman who truly meets the Lord Jesus.

Now that his burden to preach “Indictment” was behind him, Bill was enjoying his summer. In fact, he considered staying in Jeffersonville for the rest of the year. Here he had a church that gladly received his sermons, and in Tucson he didn’t even have a church to call home. He had gone to Tucson at the Lord’s command, but maybe he had fulfilled all that the Lord wanted him to do there. Perhaps he should stay in Jeffersonville, where he could preach freely. He knew his wife and children would be happy here where they had so many friends.

When he brought this up to Meda, she answered cautiously. “Bill, I know God sent you out to Arizona, but He hasn’t told you to come back. That worries me.”

⁴²⁹ 1 Kings 19:11-13; Isaiah 30:21; Jeremiah 7:23; Colossians 2:6

Bill said, “Mainly I was thinking of you and the children. I’m going to serve the Lord wherever I go.”

A few minutes later, he saw the Pillar of Fire write something on the wall of his living room. Long after the blazing letters vanished, the words remained, seared into his memory. The Lord wrote, “*Go back to Arizona.*”

During the last week of July he scheduled a day to meet with 20 people who had asked for personal interviews. These people were not members of his congregation; they were strangers from all over the country. Before the first interview began, he spent an hour praying for wisdom. Answering his prayer, the Holy Spirit opened a portal into a faster dimension and showed him every question that he would be asked that day. He wrote each question and its answer on separate sheets of paper, and then he put the tablet to the side. Each person was allotted half an hour. When that time was up, Bill reached over, got the tablet, tore the top sheet off and handed it to the surprised person. The question they were discussing was already written

out, followed by Bill’s answer, proving that the answer came from God.

On July 28, 1963, he delivered his personal masterpiece, which he titled, “Christ is the Mystery of God Revealed.” It was the summit of everything God had taught him. He said, “This sermon explains why I have said what I have said and done what I have done.”

For his text he read Colossians 1:15 through 29, which speaks of Christ..:

[15] Who is the image of the invisible God...[16] For by Him were all things created...[17] And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. [18] And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have preeminence. [19] For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; [20] And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself... [21]

And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled [22] ... to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight: [23] If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel...whereof I Paul am made a minister...[24] ...for His body's sake, which is the church: [25] Whereof I am made a minister... to fulfill the word of God; [26] Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: [27] To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: [28] Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: [29] Whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.

Bill taught that before atoms burst into existence, God devised a plan to express His loving attributes as a Father, a Son, a Savior, a Healer, etc. He crafted this plan in the form of a mystery, which He has slowly unfolded through the ages of human history. The entire Bible expresses God's great purpose of revealing Himself in Christ.

Bill said, "He is the principal theme of the entire Bible. If you read the Bible and don't see Christ in every verse of it, go back and read it again because you have missed something. The Bible is Christ. He is the Word. When you read 'In the beginning God created...' there is Christ. See? From the first verse to the last 'Amen' in Revelation—it is every word testifying of Jesus Christ."

He explained how the deeds of every Old Testament believer in some way foreshadow Christ. For example, when Moses climbed Mount Sinai and received the Ten Commandments from God, that prefigured Jesus preaching His sermon on a mountain in Galilee, saying "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time,

*Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*⁴³⁰ When John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, that act fulfilled the Old Testament type where the sacrificial ram must be washed.⁴³¹ Jesus said, *“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.”*⁴³²

When God created the universe, He had a threefold purpose in mind. First, He wanted to reveal Himself to people by expressing His attributes. He couldn't do this as Jehovah God who covers all space, time, and eternity. He is so deep and mysterious that no one could ever comprehend Him. How could they understand a Being that always existed? So, He expressed His Fatherhood by becoming the Son of man. That is why Jesus called Himself the “Son of man.”⁴³³ God wanted to identify Himself with human beings by revealing Himself in Christ.

⁴³⁰ Exodus 20:14; Matthew 5:27-28

⁴³¹ Exodus 29:15-18; Matthew 3:13-15

⁴³² John 5:39

⁴³³ Examples from Matthew 8:20; 9:6; 11:19; 12:8,32,40; 16:13,27,28; 17:9,12,22; 18:11; 20:18,28; 24:27,30,37,39,44; 25:13,31; 26:24,45,64. There are many other references in Mark, Luke, and John.

Secondly, God wanted to live in people, and thus have preeminence in a body of believers He calls His Bride. Originally He could do this in Adam and Eve; but then sin separated them from His presence. Why didn't God just keep Adam and Eve pure? If He had, He could never have expressed His full attributes. He was a Son, a Savior, and a Healer, which He could only express through Christ. See? All things are wound up in that one person, Jesus Christ. God's great purpose has always been to reveal Himself—first in Christ as the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and then in a people who will embrace Christ's Holy Spirit. These special people will make Jesus Christ preeminent in their lives. From the beginning God has worked tirelessly toward this goal, so He can be glorified in a people who will give Jesus Christ preeminence; that is, the position above or before all others.

Thirdly, God's purpose is to restore His kingdom back to the Garden of Eden, so that His people can walk with Him again in the cool of the evening, like Adam and Eve did before the fall. To this end, God

has expressed Himself through the ages as a Father, a Son, and a Holy Ghost. The Father and the Holy Ghost are the same Spirit. Do you get it? It isn't three gods; it is one God expressing Himself in three attributes. God expressed Himself in Jesus Christ, who was Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the fullness of the Godhead bodily.⁴³⁴ Now the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwells in His church (His Bride), and she gives Him preeminence. All that God was, He poured into Christ; and all that Christ is, He pours into His church (meaning individual believers, not groups.)

The Father Himself testified that Jesus Christ must have the preeminence. When Peter, James, and John went with Jesus to the top of a mountain, the disciples saw a vision of Moses and Elijah standing with their Lord. Moses represented the law, and Elijah represented the prophets. Then Moses and Elijah disappeared, leaving Jesus Christ to shine alone. Speaking from a cloud, the voice said, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him.”⁴³⁵

⁴³⁴ Colossians 2:9

⁴³⁵ Matthew 17:1-5; Mark 9:2-8

Jesus Christ is God fully manifested. Remember when Peter received his great revelation? He said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon, because you didn't get that from any man, but My Father in heaven revealed it to you. I will build My church upon this rock (the revelation of who I am), and the gates of hell won't prevail against it.”⁴³⁶ Notice that Jesus said, “Simon, blessed are you.” The revelation comes to each believer individually, never as a group. Christ's identification is with an individual—a man or woman so surrendered to the will of God that the Word manifests itself in this person. All hell is against this teaching, but it is the truth.

What is the new birth?⁴³⁷ It is your revelation that Jesus is the Christ. You are born again when Jesus Christ (who is the Word) personally reveals Himself to you.

The body of Christ has many members, with each person being individually led by God's spirit, yet all of them walking in step with His Word. How does a

⁴³⁶ Matthew 16:13-18; Mark 8:27-29

⁴³⁷ John 3:1-21; 1 Peter 1:23

person become a part of this great plan? *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”*⁴³⁸

Since Jesus Christ is the head of the body (which is His church, His Bride), then this Bride-body must follow the head, for the church is part of His resurrection, and part of the mystery. Just like God revealed Himself through Jesus Christ, and raised Him up by the Word, so He reveals Himself to His church and raises her up by the same Word. The Bride is part of His threefold mystery. Therefore, the body cannot recognize any other headship except the Word, because the head and the body are connected.

Jesus Christ was in the prophets; He was in the Psalms; He was in the history; He is here now; and He will be in things to come, making Him the same yesterday, today, and forever. If He is the principal theme of the Bible, and if the Bible is in us, then He should be the principal theme of everything we think,

say, and do. Christ should be the principal theme of our lives.

At the end of this four-hour message, Bill said, “Don’t forget that God commanded you, little children, to love one another.”⁴³⁹ Love everybody, whether they’re right or wrong, saint or sinner. If a man is wrong, love him anyhow. Don’t partake of his sins, but in sweetness—not in sourness and rebuke—in sweetness tell him of the hope of life that rests within you through Jesus Christ being revealed to you by the Holy Ghost. If you have trouble loving him, then pray to God to help you, because God loved the sinner.”

Then Bill led his congregation in the song “Take the name of Jesus with you.” At the end of the first chorus, he said, “I’m going to give you a little secret.” At the end of the second chorus he said, “Everything is manifested in Christ: God, the Bible, the church, and everything else of value is manifested in Christ.” At the end of the third chorus he said, “If you will turn

⁴³⁸ 1 Corinthians 12:12-14

⁴³⁹ 1 John 3:11, 18, 23-24; 1 John 4:7, 11-12; 2 John 1:5

and look at the clock, it is on the dot 2 o'clock—the end of the second pull; the third pull is at hand.”

THE NEXT DAY (Monday, July 29, 1963) William Branham drove to Chicago where he preached seven times from July 31 through August 4. Although these meetings were evangelistic in nature, complete with prayer-lines and supernatural discernment, his sermons still contained hints and allusions to the things he had learned during the opening of the seven seals. He could not suppress nor escape the impact those seven supernatural revelations had upon his life.

During the remainder of that summer, five more outstanding sermons thundered from his pulpit in Branham Tabernacle: “The Uniting Time and Sign;” “How Can I Overcome?;” “Perfect Faith;” “The Token;” and “Desperation!” In “Perfect Faith” He returned to his familiar theme of Mark 11:23, where Jesus said, “Whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will

be done, he will have whatever he says.” Since the opening of the seven seals, this verse had assumed even greater significance in his thinking.

On Sunday morning, September 1, 1963, he preached “The Token” in Jeffersonville. Bill read from Exodus chapter 12, where the Bible tells how the children of Israel finally escaped from slavery in Egypt. Moses told every family to kill a lamb and paint some blood from that lamb on the doorposts of their houses. Moses said that a death angel would pass through the land that night and kill every first-born son in Egypt, including every first-born son of the Israelites. The only place of safety would be in a house that displayed the blood of a lamb on its doorposts. That blood, God said, would be a token; and when he saw the blood, the angel of death would pass over everyone inside that house.

The dictionary defines a token as “something serving as an indication, a proof, or an expression of something else; a sign.” In Egypt that night a lamb died as a substitute for the death of a first-born Israelite. The blood on the doorposts was a token

showing that those inside the house believed God, and through their faith they were saved. They were identified with the blood from that lamb.

The events of that night in Egypt foreshadowed the animal sacrifices performed first at the tent tabernacle in the desert, and later at the stone temple in Jerusalem. These animal sacrifices atoned for the sins of those people who believed in Jehovah God, but in every case, the life of the animal could not come back into the believer. They left the ceremony with the same nature that they came with. Back then, the chemistry of the blood stood as a token that the sins of the worshiper were forgiven.

When Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, was sacrificed by way of Roman crucifixion around the year A.D. 33, the chemistry of His blood dripped to the ground, but the spirit-life that pulsed in His soul came back upon the believers at the day of Pentecost.⁴⁴⁰ Today, the token for the believer is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is the literal life of Jesus Christ coming back upon the believer. Its presence in a person's life shows that

the sacrificial blood of Christ has been applied by faith, and that faith has been accepted by God. It changes the nature of the worshiper, making the believer a new creation. The Token is eternal life; because it is the very life of God placed inside a human being. Bill said, "Full obedience to the whole Word of God will entitle you to the token. First, repent and be baptized in Jesus' name, and then go on from there. Full obedience to the Word, which is Christ, brings you into Christ."

While applying the Bible lesson to today, Bill stressed that everyone needs to come under the Token. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not optional; it is essential. It *is* eternal life, because it is God's own life that has entered into the believer. Many people imagine God is like a kindly old grandfather doting over His grandchildren. That is an error in thinking. God doesn't have grandchildren. He is a Father and He has sons and daughters. To become a child of God you must be born again. You cannot live in unbelief and expect the goodness of God to overlook your sins and take you to heaven anyway. You must believe God's

⁴⁴⁰ John 14:16-27; 15:26-27; 16:7; Acts 2

Word or you'll perish. In fact, you could be a very good person, go to church regularly, sing in the choir, speak in tongues, and even preach the gospel, but if the token is not displayed in your life, you will perish. The anger of God is fierce and His judgment is eternal. The only safety is under the Token. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 Paul tells us how we can become a part of the body of Christ: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body..." That is the message: come into Christ. When you truly believe God's Word, the Token will be applied over your life.

At the beginning of the evening service, Bill said, "The message this morning was to me the highlight message of my entire ministry. I hope you got what the Token meant. The Token is the sign that the blood has been applied. God required a sacrifice and Jesus paid that price by shedding His own blood. From His life came the Holy Spirit. When the blood is applied to you, the Holy Spirit is the Token that your price has been paid. God has received you. The Token is you and Christ as persons together—His life in you,

working through you by His Holy Spirit. It is for the rich, the poor—whoever will receive it."

Then Bill addressed the question on everyone's mind; the question of: "How will I know for certain if I have the Token?" He stressed that there is no specific evidence. Speaking in tongues is a gift of the Holy Spirit, not the evidence of its residence. Gifts can be impersonated by the devil and his demons. But if a person follows the directions Peter gave in Acts 2 (repent and then get baptized in the name of Jesus Christ) and if that person asks God for the Token, God is duty-bound to His Word to grant that request.⁴⁴¹ Bill urged everyone to do a self examination. Look at what your desires were before baptism; and what your desires are afterwards. That will tell you whether you have it or not. Certainly, the Token will produce in you the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.⁴⁴² Invariably, the Token will lead you into the message of God for your hour. Bill explained that the message for this hour is found in the opening of

⁴⁴¹ Luke 11: 9-13; Acts 2:38-39

⁴⁴² Galatians 5:22-23

those seven sealed mysteries; of which Jesus Christ, the Token Himself, is the capstone revelation of it all.

On Sunday evening Bill preached on the subject of, “Desperation.” In this sermon he showed how the desperation of one person can bring God on the scene for that individual. He demonstrated this principle through Scriptural examples and through stories of things he had witnessed in his own ministry. In 2 Kings 4, he drew his lesson from the story of the Shunammite woman whose only child died from heat stroke. In desperation she went to the prophet Elisha and because of her desperation, God brought her son back to life. Throughout this sermon, Bill’s theme was still *the Token*. He was pointing to the desperate need every man and woman has for the Token to be applied to his or her life. Bill said, “You can’t be desperate until God speaks to you. Oh church, rise and shake yourself! Pinch your conscience; wake yourself up in this hour! We must be desperate or perish! There is coming forth something from the Lord! I know it as ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ There is coming forth something, and we better get desperate. For each of us

it is a matter that will make the difference between life and death.”

The next morning William Branham drove his family west, leaving the humid heat of Indiana’s summer behind, heading for the dry heat of Arizona’s autumn. But he continued to stress his message of *the Token* in various sermons over the next six months, and he continued to mention it throughout the remainder of his life. It truly was the highlight of his evangelistic ministry, because this sermon explained how to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and why it was important. In the end, nothing else matters for the individual except having the Token applied.

Before 1963 ended, Bill traveled to Shreveport, Louisiana, to preach again in Life Tabernacle. At Jack Moore’s request, Bill squeezed eight sermons and a wedding ceremony into the five days between Wednesday, November 27, and Sunday, December 1. During this week he spoke again on the topic of “The Token.” It was a subject burning on his heart that he so desperately wanted people to understand. They must have the Token!

On Saturday night he planned a fast prayer-line, where the people would walk between two rows of ministers who would pray for them as they passed. To prepare the people's faith for this, Bill preached a sermon he called "Go, Wake Jesus." He drew his text from Mark 4:35-41, which tells about a boat trip Jesus and His disciples took, sailing across the Sea of Galilee. Jesus fell asleep in the stern. While He was sleeping, a storm arose that threatened to capsize the boat. His disciples woke Jesus, asking for help. Jesus stopped the storm with a single command, and then He rebuked His disciples for their lack of faith. Pointing out to his audience that Jesus was there now, Bill said, "Touch Him with your faith and watch the miracles take place."

To prove this point, Bill intended to use the discernment God had given him to demonstrate the presence of Jesus Christ. Out of the hundreds of people sitting in Life Tabernacle, he knew only about two dozen people by name. He mentioned each of these by their family names (Blair, Dauch, Evans, Fritzinger, Maguire, Moore, Sothmann, Stadslev, and

Wood) and asked these friends and acquaintances not to pray for themselves tonight; but rather pray that God would speak to those people who Bill did not know.

When the angel of the Lord appeared, Bill said, "He is here with us... I see it rising. Over against the wall to my left sits a man who is praying about his lungs. He has had a couple of lung operations which didn't fix the problem. He's praying about it. Do you believe, sir? Your name is Mr. Buford. Jesus will make you whole if you will believe it. I have never seen the man before. Stand on your feet if those things are true?" A gray-haired, middle-aged man wearing glasses stood. Meanwhile, Bill followed the movement of the angel, watching it move toward the back of the building. When it stopped, Bill said, "There is a lady sitting way in the back. She's praying for her husband. He's an alcoholic. I see him staggering. She is praying for his release. Her name is Mrs. Morgan. Raise your hand." She does. "I'm a stranger to her, but that is true. Tell me what she touched?"

The light that was a visible expression of an angel, that light moved over the audience and then stopped over a woman sitting in one of the front rows. Bill said, “Here is a lady in front of me who is sicker than she thinks. She is suffering with hemorrhoids which are becoming cancerous. Mrs. Anderson, if you believe with all your heart, Jesus Christ will make you well.”

“I see a man sitting here who has had a little trouble in his life. When he was younger he had the mumps, which damaged his heart. His children are all boys. He wants a girl now. The man is a preacher. Reverend Mr. Bird, that is true, isn’t it? God grants you your request, sir.”

Next he spoke to a woman sitting in the front row. “You’ve lost your sense of smell, haven’t you, lady.” She replied yes. He continued, “You’re a minister’s wife. You are praying for your two sons. Your name is Sister Leggs.”

“That’s right,” Mrs. Leggs responded.

To the audience, Bill said, “I never saw her before in my life. Do you believe now that His Presence is here?

Doesn’t Hebrews 4:12 say that the Word of God is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart? Jesus is in the ship. He is right here; His Word doing just what it said He would do—taking the secrets of the heart and making them known. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”⁴⁴³

Chapter 91

Stopping a Blizzard

Autumn 1963

NOW THAT THEIR summer vacation was over, Rebekah, Sarah, and Joseph Branham returned to their respective schools in September of 1963. One afternoon Meda had to go shopping for clothes and school supplies for her children. Bill drove her to the J.C. Penny department store in downtown Tucson.

⁴⁴³ Hebrews 13:8

While Meda browsed the aisles of women's clothing on the first floor, Bill rode the escalator up to the second floor to look for a shirt. After he found what he wanted, he sat in a chair near the escalator landing and waited for his wife. The store was crowded with shoppers. A steady stream of people moved up and down the two escalators. Like red and white corpuscles flowing through blood vessels, these shoppers were the life-blood of the store. Many of the women wore their short hair puffed up in the bouffant style made popular by Jacqueline Kennedy, the wife of the president of the United States. Three teenage boys came up the escalator. They wore their hair long and shaggy, with bangs hanging to their eyebrows, in the style of the British rock-and-roll music group called the Beatles. The hair of one boy was so long it covered his shoulders. When these three boys stepped off the escalator, they gathered around a rack of shirts, looking at price tags.

A woman with short hair stepped off the escalator behind them. She sat in the chair next to Bill, setting her shopping bags on the floor. Tipping her head

toward the boys with long hair, she asked, "What do you think about that?"

Personally, Bill thought the boys looked like sissies; but to this woman he said, "If you want to criticize them, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. They have as much right to grow their hair long as you do to cut yours off. According to the Bible, neither one of you should do it."

Surprised at this reply, the woman picked up her bags and walked away. The boys with long hair also left. Bill watched more people step off the up-moving escalator, and others get on the down-moving escalator. Few of the women wore dresses. Most of them wore pants, or shorts. Some of the teenage girls wore scanty, revealing tops. Almost all of women wore their hair short. Bill felt a great sadness sweep over him to the point of making him sick. How far, it seemed, the world had drifted away from godliness, holiness, and decency.

He noticed that, for the most part, the faces of these shoppers lacked expression. Gradually, he grew aware of the general hubbub they were making, thumping

their feet, rustling their packages, mumbling to one another, making an overall “Uhh...uhh...uhh...uhh” sound, like the throbbing of a distant propeller plane, or perhaps it sounded like the oscillating groan of a car engine that turns over but won’t start, multiplied by many car engines trying but failing to start. No, it sounded like something else, something he had heard a long time ago, but could not quite place. The next woman who came up the escalator looked strangely familiar. She was a Caucasian woman speaking in Spanish to a Hispanic woman standing beside her. Beneath her horned-rim glasses, the skin above her eyes was painted lizard-green. The color of that eyeshadow triggered something in Bill’s memory. Now he knew where he had seen her before.

Suddenly, he was in hell again—the hell he had visited at age fourteen, when he had almost died from that shotgun blast to his legs. Here was that same dreadful “Uhh...uhh...uhh” in the background. Here were the same lifeless people with their deadpan faces. And here stood that same woman with the hideous greenish-blue color above her eyes like a cankered

sore from some disease. He had seen all this forty years ago when he had visited the region of lost souls. He could never forget that loathsome place, at least not while he was on this earth.

Feeling weak and nauseated, he went down the escalator and found his wife. As soon as Meda saw him, she asked, “Bill, what is the matter with you? Are you sick?”

“Not exactly, but if you don’t mind, I want to go home now. I feel like a dead man.” When she gave him a quizzical look, he added, “Something happened up there, but I can’t tell you about it now. I’m going to wait until I can tell it to the church in Jeffersonville.”

WILLIAM BRANHAM did not schedule any meetings for the fall of 1963, reserving some time for two major hunting trips. In September Bill and Billy Paul, along with Fred Sothmann, traveled north to British Columbia, this time to hunt for bighorn sheep. They camped beside the Toad River, near Mile 442 on the Alaskan Highway. Earlier that year Bud Southwick

had hired a young man to help him on these hunting expeditions—a Native American named Oscar, who was a member of the Mountain Indian Beaver Tribe. The day Bill arrived at Bud's cabin, Oscar came by and asked if the faith-healer would come with him and pray for his mother. She had a heart attack and was right now dying. Bill and Bud followed Oscar to his village. Oscar led them to a cabin where his mother was lying in bed, pale and weak. Her husband and many of her children were there. (She had 22 children.) Since the dying woman didn't speak English, her daughter, Louise, translated for her. Bill talked to the mother until he contacted her spirit. Then the Holy Spirit revealed personal things about her life that amazed everyone in the room. Bill asked God to heal her in Jesus' name. The mother's face relaxed and she fell asleep, breathing deeply. A few minutes later she woke up feeling like a new woman. Bill recited the Lord's Prayer, and then he and Bud left.

The next morning Oscar arrived early at Bud's cabin so he could help load the packhorses. By mid-morning the hunters were riding their horses north. Since

Oscar's village was not far out of their way, Bill wanted to stop by there and see how Oscar's mother was doing. He found her and her daughter standing outside the cabin saddling two horses. Recently, Oscar had killed a moose and now the two women were going to cut it into strips for drying.

Bill said to Oscar's sister, "Louise, last night when we prayed the Lord's Prayer, you thought it was a Catholic prayer; but it's not just for Catholics. Jesus taught us to pray 'Our Father who art in heaven; hallowed be Thy name.' That belongs to every Christian. But today I don't want to recite a prayer; I want to pray with you and thank God for healing your mother."

"We are no longer Catholics," Louise said. "We believe like you believe. We want you to baptize us in the name of Jesus Christ. We want the Holy Ghost."

After the baptisms, the hunting party again mounted their horses and rode into the wilderness. Their goal was a certain mountain valley 40 miles back from the nearest road. That night in camp, while the hunters were eating dinner around the fire, Oscar told them

about some ponies he had lost a few months ago. It was his fault, a clear case of carelessness. Bud Southwick scolded him, saying “Oscar, you know better than to leave those horses like that. You have lost them for sure. By now the bears will have eaten them. Those domestic horses can’t escape a grizzly bear.” Oscar’s face drooped at this rebuke. For the next few days he stayed near Bill wherever Bill went. One evening Oscar said, “Can I ask you something?”

Bill said, “Sure, Oscar. What is it?”

“Brother Branham, will you ask God to help me find my ponies?”

Bill wasn’t sure if this was possible. “Bud said the bears would have eaten them by now.”

“Brother Branham, if you ask God to do it, I believe God will give me back my ponies.”

“Do you really believe that, Oscar?”

“I believe. God healed my mother. God told you where that caribou was, and He showed you that grizzly bear when nobody else could see it. God knows where my ponies are. He can protect them, and He can show you where they are.”

Later that night while they were sitting around a campfire, the Holy Spirit came upon Bill and he saw the night turn suddenly into a bright, sunny day. He was looking at a canyon squeezed between high mountain peaks. There he saw a group of horses huddled together. The snow lay so deep in the canyon that the horses couldn’t move around much. They looked thin, but otherwise healthy. Bill saw someone approaching on snowshoes—the wide webbing of the shoes making a crunch-swish, crunch-swish sound as the figure walked across the deep snow. As soon as Bill recognized the man on snowshoes, he found himself back at his camp, staring into the flames of a crackling fire. Looking up at the starry night, he said, “Oscar, you’ll find your ponies. That is ‘Thus saith the Lord.’”

“Where, Brother Branham?”

“I don’t know. The Lord didn’t tell me that. But you will find them. They’ll be standing in snow.”⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴⁴ On June 12, 1964, William Branham received a letter from Louise saying that recently her brother found his ponies standing in a snow-filled canyon, just like Bill said he would. In fact, the snow in this mountainous region was too deep to get his ponies out right away, so Oscar carried food in to them by sled.

DURING OCTOBER of 1963 Bill went deer hunting at his usual spot in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. A number of men had joined him for this year's hunt: Welch Evans and his son, Ronnie; Banks Wood and his son, David; Earl and John Martin; Jack Palmer, Vernon Mann, Carl Wheeler and Billy Paul Branham. They stopped to buy gas and groceries at the little town of Kremmling, about 80 miles northwest of Denver. Then they followed a dirt road that took them generally north as it paralleled Troublesome Creek. Finally they came to their campsite in the Corral Peaks wilderness area, right on the Continental Divide. Not far to the west of them was Rabbit Ears pass on Highway 40, so named for a distinctive rock formation on the summit of Rabbit Ears Mountain.

Deer hunting season would open the next day at dawn. After the eleven men set up their camp and got a campfire burning, everyone pulled out their rifles and talked about hunting—everyone, that is, except Vernon Mann. He brought a fishing pole instead of a rifle. Bill told Vernon where he could catch some trout

behind a beaver dam not far away. Before the sun set, Vernon came back to camp with eight trout.

That night the temperature dropped below freezing, and in the morning the campers had to break ice over the creek to get a bucket of water. During breakfast they planned the day's hunt—that is, who would go with whom and in what direction. Bill liked to pair an experienced hunter with a less experienced hunter, if possible.

Jack Palmer said, "Brother Bill, if you kill your deer first, go ahead and shoot one for me. I'll just tag it and be done. I don't have to shoot it myself to be happy. I'm more interested in the meat than the sport."

Politely but firmly Bill refused this request. Years ago he used to shoot game for other people in his hunting group. During one hunting trip in the late fifties, he shot 19 elk for Christian businessmen while they sat around a campfire swapping stories. After that trip, a burden of conviction settled over him and he promised the Lord he would never do that again, unless there was an emergency and someone desperately needed the meat.

On Tuesday Bill and Billy Paul spotted Big Jim—a wily old buck that had eluded him for years. Big Jim paused between two pine trees long enough for Bill to place the crosshairs of his scope on the animal's heart. At the crack of his rifle, the buck leaped and vanished in the underbrush. Bill was sure he had killed him, but when he and Billy Paul reached that spot, the animal was gone. They tracked it for over an hour before they found its dead body. The bullet had struck too high to kill it humanely. Bill felt bad about that. Although he had tested his gun sight in Tucson a few days earlier, the change in temperature and humidity had apparently thrown his sighting scope off the mark. As they dressed out the meat, they handled the head carefully. Bill planned to have it stuffed and mounted. With each antler sporting six points, the head of Big Jim would make a magnificent trophy.

Wednesday morning was October 23, which happened to be Bill and Meda's 22nd wedding anniversary. While Meda was home getting their children ready for school, Bill was warming his hands on a cup of coffee and watching his breath condense in

the chilly mountain air. The hunters left camp early, each group going a different direction. Having shot his deer, Bill was now acting as a guide to help other hunters find theirs. That morning no one saw a deer. Bill returned to camp around noon. The other hunters were already back. Everyone was talking about the weather. While they had been out hunting, a ranger had come by their camp and warned Vernon Mann about an approaching storm. Turning on a radio in one of the pickups, they listened while a broadcaster described a massive cold front moving down from Canada, bringing with it a lot of wind and snow. The weatherman said meteorologists were predicting this storm would arrive in Colorado sometime tomorrow.

All morning hunters had been evacuating the higher elevations. Dozens of pickups and jeeps had driven past Bill's camp site already, heading down the mountain. Bill explained to his hunting group why everyone else was leaving. In that mountainous terrain a blizzard can kill someone who is not prepared. It can dump enough snow overnight to completely bury a tent. Depending on the severity of the storm, it was

possible they could get stuck in camp for many days. Bill was scheduled to preach in Tucson in six days, but if any of his friends wanted to stay and hunt, he would stay with them. Earl and John Martin, Jack Palmer, and Carl Wheeler decided to leave. Welch Evans, Banks Wood, and Reverend Mann wanted to stay and try to shoot a deer before the storm hit. (Billy Paul Branham, David Wood, and Ronnie Evans were stuck with the decisions made by their fathers.)

Bill and Vernon drove the 30 miles back to Kremmling so they could buy more groceries, just in case the snow storm trapped them for a while in the mountains. Bill called Meda to wish her a happy anniversary. He also wanted to know how she was feeling. (The cyst on her left ovary had continued growing until, at her last medical examination, it had reached the size of a grapefruit—a cause for real concern.) Meda wasn't home, so he called Mrs. Evans and asked her to call his wife and tell her he was thinking about her on their wedding anniversary. While at the store, he bought the evening newspaper. A front page headline forecast the approaching blizzard.

Early Thursday morning, Bill boiled a pot of coffee and studied the black clouds hugging the northern horizon. After breakfast, the men shouldered their rifles and planned their routes. Bill said, "I'll go up to 'the saddle' and drive any deer I find down into the canyon toward you. Pay close attention to where you are and how to get back to camp. As soon as you see one snowflake, head back because in fifteen minutes it could be snowing so hard you won't be able to see over twenty feet in front of you."

In spite of the chilly autumn air, hiking up that ridge made Bill perspire. About four miles away from camp he reached the place he called 'the saddle'—a sway-backed dip in the mountain ridge where he could easily cross over into the next valley. As he studied the rugged Corral Peaks which surrounded him, a snowflake brushed his cheek. Soon they were everywhere—big fluffy snowflakes, swirling around him, pushed along by a brisk north wind. He tucked his rifle under his coat to keep the lens of his scope from fogging up with condensation. Bears move during blizzards, so he needed to have a clear scope in

case he had to defend himself. With a sigh of regret, he turned and walked back the way he had come. Within five minutes, snowflakes the size of silver dollars had turned the ground white and slippery. By now the dark gray clouds had filled the whole sky, and a howling wind was pushing the snow in diagonal patterns. Although Bill could only see twenty to thirty feet in front of him, he wasn't worried about getting lost. The ridge would lead him to the creek, and he could follow the creek back to camp.

He had walked about half a mile down the ridge when he thought he heard someone say, "*Stop. Go back.*" He continued his downward progress, thinking that the wind blowing through the trees was playing a trick on his ears; but now he was alert and listening carefully. Above the whine and whistle of the wind, he heard someone say again, "*Stop. Turn around and go back.*"

Suddenly his legs felt as lifeless as the rifle under his coat. He stopped and looked at his watch. It was almost 10 o'clock. Pulling a soggy baloney sandwich from his pocket, he ate it while he considered what to

do. Why would God tell him to go back to the saddle in the face of this blizzard? It sounded ridiculous. Yet all through his life, God had never led him in the wrong direction. This seemed like as good of a time as any to exercise his faith. He turned and slowly picked his way back up the ridge until once again he stood on the rocky base of the saddle. Snow swirled madly around him. He thought, "What am I doing here?"

Clearly now, above the whine of the wind, he heard a voice say, "*I am the Creator of heaven and earth. I made the wind and the rain. Nature obeys Me.*"

Taking off his cowboy hat, Bill looked around. Often God would speak to him from a great light, which Bill understood was the Pillar of Fire. But there was no such supernatural light here. The voice seemed to come from the top of a group of trees. Bill asked, "Great Jehovah, is that You?"

"*I was the one who made the winds and waves cease on the Sea of Galilee. I am the one who told you to speak those squirrels into existence. I am God. Speak to this storm and it will obey you.*"

Because these words sounded in tune with the Scripture, he believed it really was his Creator speaking to him. “I won’t doubt You, Lord,” Bill said. “Clouds, snow, sleet, and wind, I resent your coming. In the name of Jesus Christ, go back to your former places. I say that the sun must come out immediately and shine every day until my hunting trip is over.”

Suddenly the force of the wind shifted. Now it blew from the south, lifting the clouds and pushing them back the way they had come. The snow stopped. A sliver of sunlight probed through a hole in the clouds. Within five minutes of the time Bill had spoken his command, the full face of the sun showed itself, melting the snow on the ground and sucking the moisture back into the air. The mountainside steamed with evaporation as the patch of blue sky widened. Soon autumn burst forth in all her golden beauty.

Bill felt numb with awe and respect. He thought, “The very God of Creation is near me. Everything is in His hands. What will He tell me next?”

God said, “*Why don’t you walk with Me through this wilderness?*”

“Yes, Lord, it would be a privilege. Walking with You is one of the greatest things I could ever do.”

By now the force of the wind had dropped until it was just a pleasant breeze. Slinging his rifle over his shoulder, Bill strolled leisurely down the mountain, following a game trail through virgin timber. When he came to a clearing, he felt the sunshine radiating through his clothing and warming his skin. He put his hat back on his head to shade his eyes.

His thoughts wandered from the goodness of his Lord to his wedding anniversary and the goodness of his wife. He thought about Meda’s best characteristics: piety, patience, dependability, and on top of all that, she was such a hard worker. She ran the house and cared for their children while he traveled and preached one evangelistic campaign after another. Many times he would come home and, like a magnet, draw dozens of people to his house, putting a strain on his family. Then out he would go, hunting or fishing, but mainly just to get away from the crowds and rest his mind. Through all of this, she never complained, except for

that one time last fall. She was such an admirable woman, a real diamond.

If she had any flaws at all, perhaps it was her shyness, or maybe she cleaned too much. The last time he was home, there was one afternoon when he felt like sitting on the living room couch and just talking to her. She was distracted because she was in the middle of doing laundry and didn't want to quit. As he strolled down the mountain ridge, Bill thought, "Maybe she likes me to go out on the road so she can get her work done." Deep inside, he knew that wasn't true. "Lord," he said, "You know that yesterday was my wedding anniversary. If You don't have any particular place for me to go, I'll walk over to that bunch of aspen trees and salute my wife, as a memorial to our many happy years of marriage."

Not far from the saddle stood a grove of quaking aspen trees that reminded Bill of the place in the Adirondack Mountains of New York State where he and Meda had camped on their honeymoon/hunting trip twenty-two years ago. Every October that he hunted here in Colorado, he visited this spot as a way

of honoring their wedding anniversary. As he approached the aspen grove, he thought about how much Meda had changed from the dark-haired girl he had married. She was still beautiful, but now her dark hair was streaked with gray. Bill pulled his rifle out from under his coat and looked at his reflection in the circular glass of its sighting scope. At age 54, his three-day-old beard revealed many gray hairs. As he watched, the gray hairs darkened until his beard was as black as it had been the morning he shaved for his wedding. Looking up, he was surprised to see Meda standing on the trail in front of him—not the woman he had left in Tucson, but the black-haired girl who had walked with him down the aisle of his church to exchange vows and rings.

"What is happening?" He thought. Then he realized, "Oh yes, I'm walking with the Master."

This young Meda raised her arms to beckon him. As he stepped forward, the vision faded, and with it, his joy left him, replaced by a deep longing that he couldn't explain.

When he reached the Aspen grove, he laid on his stomach, cushioned by a thick carpet of fallen leaves. Closing his eyes, he prayed, “Dear God, You’ve been so good to me. I’m not worthy to be Your servant, but I thank You for the privilege of serving You. I’m sorry for all the mistakes I’ve made. For many years I have felt a mysterious burden that never seems to go away. I thought it would lift after the seven seals were opened, but it didn’t. I have repented as best as I know how to repent. I’m not even sure what this burden means. Please, will You lift this burden from my heart?”

He could hear water dripping nearby, going splat, splat, splat. It wasn’t until he opened his eyes that he realized the sound came from his tears falling on the mat of dead leaves. Sitting up, he leaned back against a tree and studied his surroundings. Aspen trees belong to the poplar family. These aspens had white bark around small trunks that rose straight as arrows. During the summer their leaves were light green, but now they had turned yellow and brown. Perhaps half the leaves still clung to their branches, fluttering like little flags in the light breeze.

A steady crunch, crunch, crunch of leaves turned his head. Three deer had entered the grove—a doe and two fawns that were almost full grown. Since deer don’t distinguish colors very well, they might not have noticed the red bandana Bill used for a hatband; but these alert animals couldn’t have missed the movement of his head, or the outline of his silhouette against the light-colored backdrop of the aspen trunks and leaves—and yet they didn’t seem alarmed by his presence. How could that be? Yesterday dozens of rifle shots had echoed across these valleys. These animals should be very suspicious of him.

Slowly Bill lifted his rifle, thinking, “There is one deer for Brother Evans, one for Brother Wood, and one for Brother Mann. Three shots are all it will take—three seconds, maybe four.” Then he stopped himself. “I can’t do it. I promised the Lord I wouldn’t shoot deer for other people, so I won’t do it.” The deer walked by him so close that if he had leaned out a little and stretched his arm, he could have touched them. They wandered to the edge of the grove, and then, inexplicably, they turned and walked by him

again. A thought shouted inside his head, “Kill them! The Lord has delivered them into your hands!” Bill countered this thought with a Scriptural example: “Someone said that same thing to David one night when King Saul fell asleep in the mouth of the cave where David was hiding. But David refused to do it.⁴⁴⁵ Neither will I kill these deer.” Out loud he said, “Mother, your life is in my hands, but I will spare you. Take your children and go.”

She lifted her head and looked at him quizzically, raising her ears and flicking her tail. Then she casually led her children out of the grove.

From somewhere above him, that majestic voice said, “*You remembered your promise to Me. I also remember My promise to you: I will never leave you or forsake you.*”

Instantly his mysterious burden left him, never to return. Over the next four days, all the hunters in his party shot a deer. The weather remained clear and warm throughout the hunt. On their way back to civilization, they stopped at a gas station to fill their

tanks. While chatting with the owner, Bill said, “We had beautiful weather for hunting, although the mountains are rather dry. They could use some rain or snow.”

The owner scratched his head. “You know, the strangest thing happened around here. Last week the weathermen said we were going to have a blizzard. On Thursday it started to snow, and then suddenly it quit. When I read the Friday paper to see what happened, the forecasters didn’t know. They were stumped.”

“That does sound odd,” Bill said, feeling that he shouldn’t say any more until first he told his church about it.

IN MID-NOVEMBER, Bill was scheduled to preach for a week in New York City. Several Pentecostal churches in the city were sponsoring this evangelistic campaign. While driving from Tucson to New York, Bill stopped in Jeffersonville around noon on Friday, November 8, 1963. Naturally, Orman Neville asked him to preach on Sunday. During the morning service,

⁴⁴⁵ 1 Samuel 24

Bill told the people at Branham Tabernacle about how he sat in a J.C. Penny department store and somehow found himself back in hell. What did it mean? He didn't know, but he had some ideas. He called this sermon "Souls That Are in Prison Now," and in it, he chose a similar path to the one he had followed when he preached "Is This the Sign of the End, Sir?"—that is, he examined some Scriptures about what someday will be, and speculated on how close we might be to that day.

In Matthew 24:36 and 37 Jesus said, "*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only. For as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*" Verse 36, he now knew, was a reference to the seventh seal. That made Bill study verse 37 to the end of the chapter with new appreciation. Exactly how did Noah's day parallel the end times? Noah warned people to repent of their evil ways, turn to God and escape the coming flood by entering the ark he was building. Because it sounded so fantastic, that ancient society didn't believe him. It took Noah 120 years to

build his ship. Then Noah entered the ark with his family and God shut the door. The Bible said that Noah waited in the ark for seven days before it began to rain.⁴⁴⁶ During those seven days everyone outside the ark continued their lives as usual, not realizing they had missed their chance to escape destruction. The only doorway to safety was closed.

Noah's ark is a type of Christ, who is the only safety for the soul of man. After Jesus' death on the cross, during the hours that His body laid in a tomb, His soul descended into hell where He preached to the souls in prison. Why? He was proclaiming His victory over death and hell. Peter said that Jesus descended into hell to preach to those same people who had rejected Noah's message.⁴⁴⁷

"*For as the days of Noah were...*" Bill wondered just how far a person could carry that type into today. Obviously there was a parallel between the evil in Noah's day, and the sin and corruption in today's society. But could that parallel also include the "door

⁴⁴⁶ Genesis 7:6-10

⁴⁴⁷ 1 Peter 3:18-20

to the ark” closing and the believers waiting inside the ark for a while before the judgments of God begin?

Revelation chapter 5 showed Christ, the Lamb of God, taking the Book of Redemption from His Father. The Book of Redemption contains the names of everyone who will be saved. Revelation 13:8 said the Lamb of God was slain in the mind of God before the foundation of the world, and that is when God wrote the names of His children in the Book of Redemption. At the beginning of man’s sojourn on earth he lost his way and became separated from God. Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, paid the full price for mankind’s redemption when He sacrificed Himself on a Roman cross around the year 33 A.D. But many of those predestinated to be redeemed were not yet born. So, after Jesus rose from the dead, He took the position of a mediator between God and man until the last predestinated son and daughter of God is born, accepts Christ and is born again. When the last child of God receives the Holy Ghost, Christ will no longer need to do the work of a mediator.

Knowing what a tremendous event happened last March when the Lamb of God broke open the seven seals, Bill wondered if the “door to the ark” was in the processes of closing. The seventh seal indicated a span of time, a mysterious “half hour of silence,” the details of which God kept secret. Jesus said He was the only door into God’s kingdom.⁴⁴⁸ That doorway has been open to the Gentiles for approximately 2000 years. Bill said that somewhere between the opening of the seventh seal and the opening of the seventh trumpet, the door into God’s mercy will close forever. Christ’s ministry as the Lamb of God will be over. When He returns to Israel and His feet touch the Mount of Olives again, He will be known as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

In this sermon Bill was not emphasizing fear; he was hammering away at the crucial question: Are you born again? If you are born again, your new nature will lead you to God’s message for your hour. The rest of the church will sleep right through it. At some point, the “door to the ark” will close. Those people left outside will be in a type of prison they chose for themselves.

⁴⁴⁸ John 10:1-18

Bill testified, “I saw a vision of both places—the region of the lost, and the region of the redeemed ones. Far be it for any person to enter that region of the lost. The human mind can’t comprehend how horrible it is! Whoever is listening to my voice, if you are not saved, repent right now, and get your soul right with God. Join the company of the redeemed. I want you to end up in that blessed place where the redeemed are living in peace. That place is so far beyond our concept of perfection that our words here can’t describe it.⁴⁴⁹ As God is my Judge, I solemnly believe I’ve been in both places. I’m telling you the truth.”

That evening Bill preached “He That Is In You.” During this sermon, he told his congregation about his hunting trip in Colorado where he spoke to that storm and it obeyed him. Again he stressed the significance of Mark 11:23—if you say to this mountain, ‘Be moved,’ and don’t doubt in your heart, it will happen. Bill said, “If we only could realize what this Scripture means: *‘Greater is He that is in you than he that is in*

the world.’⁴⁵⁰ We know it is the truth, but we really don’t understand it. What is in you that is greater? It’s Christ, the Anointed! God, who was in Christ, is in you. So, if He is in you, then it’s not you any more living, it’s Him living in you. See? That doesn’t mean He has to perform miracles through every believer. When Moses led the children of Israel, he was the only Israelite who performed miracles. The rest of them just followed his message. But God is in you like He was in Jesus Christ. Remember, all that God is, He poured into Christ; and all Christ is, He pours into His church.”

Returning from New York City, Bill spent the weekend of November 23 and 24 in Jeffersonville. Sunday morning at Branham Tabernacle he preached “What Shall I Do with Jesus Called Christ?”—referring to the question asked by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.⁴⁵¹ His point was this—don’t be too quick to condemn Pilate, because every one of us is faced with the same question: What should I do with Jesus Christ? That evening he preached “Three

⁴⁴⁹ 1 Corinthians 2:9; 2 Corinthians 12:1-4; Revelation 21 and 22

⁴⁵⁰ 1 John 4:4

⁴⁵¹ Matthew 27:22

Kinds of Believers,” showing how the world could be divided into three groups of people: believers, make-believers, and unbelievers. Make-believers are those people who say they have faith in God, but the fruit of their lives doesn’t agree with what they say.

Later that night he decided to call his wife. Because of the difference in time zones (Indiana was two hours later than Arizona) he figured she would still be awake. Bill was concerned about Meda’s health. Over the past 12 months, the cyst on her left ovary had grown from the size of a walnut to the size of a grapefruit. Together they had prayed for a miraculous healing, but so far their prayers had not been answered. Bill knew they could not wait much longer. Dr. Scott was urging them to have the growth surgically removed before it turned malignant.

Bill was not against doctors; in fact he often spoke highly of them to his audiences. But he always reminded people that God is the only healer, and doctors only assist the natural processes that God put in place for our healing.

When Meda answered the phone, she quickly shared her bad news. “Oh Bill, this has been the worst week so far. I can barely move. My side has swollen so much that it’s sticking out two inches. I can’t bear to have my dress touch the spot. I’ve been lying down most of the week.”

“When is your next doctor appointment?”

“Tomorrow morning. Sister Norman is going to take me.”

“Honey,” Bill said, “do you think you could wait on that operation a few weeks? It would be nice to bring the children back to Jeffersonville for Christmas. Then right after Christmas you could have that growth removed.”

“I’ll ask Dr. Scott if he will allow it.”

“I’m leaving for Louisiana in the morning. It will take me two days to get to Shreveport.”

She said, “Call me Wednesday night after the meeting, so you can tell me how all our friends are doing.”

The next morning Bill knelt to pray in front of a cushioned footstool in his living room. Through all the

years he had lived in the parsonage in Jeffersonville, every time he left home to go on an evangelistic campaign, his family gathered around this footstool to pray with him before he left. On this morning he briefly prayed for the upcoming campaign, and then he focused on Meda's affliction.

"Lord Jesus, I pray that You will be merciful to her. Don't let that growth be malignant. Lord, she didn't mean what she said that morning. She's never complained about me traveling and preaching, or about me hunting and fishing. She always has my clothes clean and ready to go. She has been such a big help to me, and I love her deeply. If that cyst must be removed, let the doctor wait until January to do it. But I still ask You to perform a miracle and heal her without an operation. She's been cut open several times to have our children. I hate to see her go through another operation."

Bill thought he heard someone say, "*Stand.*" Since he was the only person in the house, he thought he had imagined it, and so, he continued praying. Then he heard it again, "*Stand.*" He looked at the picture of

Jesus hanging on the wall, a print of a painting by Heinrich Hoffman. Bill liked to pray beneath this picture because it helped him to stay focused. It helped to remind him that Jesus really was listening to every word he said. Now he saw the Pillar of Fire reflected in the glass cover that protected this picture. He heard that voice a third time, commanding, "*Stand.*"

He stood, turned and faced a column of flame that burned in the center of his living room. His chest felt tight, and he gasped, trying to breathe in enough oxygen. From the midst of that flame a voice said, "*Whatever you say, that is the way it will be.*" Then the Pillar of Fire seemed to fold in upon itself until it was gone.

The room was so still and quiet, a make-believer might have doubted that something supernatural just happened. But William Branham was a believer, and he was in no mood to doubt the Lord Jesus. He said, "Before the doctor's hand touches my wife, the hand of God will take that growth away, and it won't even be found."

Confident that Meda would be all right, Bill drove to the house where Billy Paul and Loyce were staying, and together the three of them drove south to Shreveport, Louisiana. On Wednesday night after the service, they gathered around a telephone to call Meda in Tucson. Bill said to his son, “You listen and see if it didn’t happen just the way I said it would.”

When Meda answered the phone, her voice sounded sweet and happy. “Bill, I have something wonderful to tell you. The cyst is gone. I don’t know what happened. When I went into the examination room, my side hurt so much that I could barely walk. Sister Norman had to help me get up on the examination table. As soon as Dr. Scott came in the room, I felt something cold go through me and my side quit hurting. When Dr. Scott looked for the cyst, it wasn’t there. He ran every test again, but he couldn’t find it.”

Chapter 92

Earthquake

1964

DURING THE FIRST FOUR MONTHS of 1964, William Branham spoke in Phoenix, Arizona; Bakersfield and Tulare, California; Dallas and Beaumont, Texas; Denham Springs and Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Louisville, Mississippi; Birmingham, Alabama; Tampa, Florida; and then back in his adopted home town of Tucson, Arizona. Whether Bill was speaking at a Full Gospel Business Men’s convention or preaching an evangelistic campaign, his sermons were now sprinkled with references to the things he had learned during the opening of the seven seals.

Roy Borders was now acting as his campaign manager. Bill invited Roy to go hunting with him at

the end of February. He said they would be hunting javelina hogs, and he told Roy to invite anyone he wanted to go with them. Roy Borders promptly invited his friend Douglas McHughes, who was the pastor of a church in San Jose, California. McHughes had attended some of Bill's evangelistic campaigns. He had even helped sponsor a Branham campaign in California, but he had never met Bill personally, so he was delighted to have this opportunity to spend several days with him. Douglas McHughes couldn't imagine how much this hunting trip was going to change his life.

On February 5, 1964, in Bakersfield, California, Bill preached "God Is His Own Interpreter." This simple but profound principle can help Christians understand all of the Bible's prophecies. He illustrated his text with many examples, such as Isaiah 7:14, where God said a virgin will someday conceive and bear a son who would be called Immanuel (that is, God with us.) Jewish scholars debated the meaning of this passage for centuries, but one day a virgin named Mary became pregnant before she knew any man. Nine

months later she named her newborn baby boy, Jesus. Regardless of previous theories, Isaiah 7:14 was now interpreted. God interpreted it Himself by bringing it to pass.

That was a prophecy fulfilled 2,000 years ago. For a modern example, he quoted Luke 17:28-30: "*Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.*" Obviously, this Scripture refers to the gross evil that will flood the world in the last days, exemplified by the ancient Sodomites and their lust for homosexuality. Bill saw beyond this obvious reference to a deeper significance for this verse. While Lot lived in Sodom, Abraham lived on a mountain far from that wicked city. One day God stepped into a human body and visited Abraham. They ate a meal together, and then God told Abraham that during the next year he would have a son by his wife, Sarah. She was in her tent, listening to this

conversation. Because she was 89 years old, she thought the man outside was joking, and she chuckled silently at the joke. God was facing away from her tent, so He couldn't see her face to read her expression; but He knew her thoughts. He asked Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Is anything too hard for the Lord?"⁴⁵² Jesus promised this scenario would repeat in the last days—God manifesting Himself in human flesh. How will it happen? Before the fact, people can speculate about how it might happen; but after the fact, they should not argue with God's interpretation of His own Word. (Unfortunately, many people do argue with God by disbelieving His interpretation.) Since the days of Abraham, there has not been a major Jewish or Christian leader with a name that ended in "H-A-M"—until now. The most widely heard evangelist of the twentieth century is probably Billy Graham. Notice, Graham has six letters, the number of man. (Man was created on the sixth day.) Abraham has seven letters, which is God's number of completion.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵² Genesis 18 and 19

⁴⁵³ See note in Endnotes and Sources.

Near the end of this meeting, William Branham asked those people with prayer-cards to form a line on his right. A woman stood at the front of this line. She walked forward and stood in front of the evangelist. Bill said, "I don't know this woman. I'll turn my back to her, so that you won't think I'm trying to read her face." He turned away from her, and then prayed while the microphone amplified his prayer: "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, let it be known tonight that I'm telling the truth about You. Let Your servant be able to get his own thoughts out of the way, so that You can use my body for Your glory. I pray this in the name of Jesus, the Son of God. Amen." With his body still turned away from the woman, he said, "The lady behind me is going to die right away if she isn't healed. She has cancer in her breast, and also in her lungs. Recently, another evangelist prayed for her, but she is struggling, trying to accept her healing by faith. That is 'Thus saith the Lord.'" He turned around to face her. "Is that true, lady?"

She answered, "Yes, it sure is true."

"Go believing and you will get well."

The next person in the prayer-line was a teenage girl. Having made his point, he did not turn his back on her, but asked, “Do you believe God is able to reveal to me what’s wrong?” She nodded. He said, “You are not standing here for yourself—you are here for your brother. He is in a hospital in a city north of here—Tulare, California. He has leukemia, and the doctors have given him up to die. There is no hope at all for him. Do you believe?”

“Yes,” she cried.

“Take that handkerchief in your hand and lay it on your brother. Don’t doubt—believe. Amen.”

Bill said to the audience, “I never saw this young lady in my life before tonight. How could a man do this? He can’t. It is the God that Jesus Christ promised would be here in the last days, and would vindicate Himself to Abraham’s seed just like He did to Abraham before the destruction of Sodom. Seed of Abraham, receive your sign! It isn’t out there in Babylon; it isn’t out there in the denominational world. It’s here among you. Those who are not in that mess out there, believe it!”

The next night in Bakersfield he preached a sermon he called “Paradox.” A paradox is something that, at first glance, seems to conflict with common sense, yet it is true. The Bible is full of paradoxes. To name just a few, Bill mentioned how Joshua commanded the sun and moon to stand still for about a whole day, so that he could finish an important battle.⁴⁵⁴ Samson used the jawbone of a donkey to kill a thousand Philistines.⁴⁵⁵ Samson also pulled the gates of a city off their hinges and carried them up a hill.⁴⁵⁶ A boy named David killed a seasoned warrior named Goliath, even though Goliath was more than twice David’s size and was covered with armor.⁴⁵⁷

Then Bill came to the biggest paradox of all. He said, “It is a paradox, how a woman could conceive a child without knowing a man. It is a paradox how God, the Eternal One who fills all time and eternity, could come down and become one little baby crying in a manger. God created a blood cell in Mary’s womb, which was His own Son, Jesus Christ. And God lived

⁴⁵⁴ Joshua 10:13

⁴⁵⁵ Judges 15:15

⁴⁵⁶ Judges 16:3

⁴⁵⁷ 1 Samuel 17

in there, identifying Himself in Christ. That was God, Emmanuel. Jesus said, ‘I and My Father are one. My Father dwells in Me.’ God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Jesus was the body, the tabernacle; God was the Spirit that lived in Him. It was a paradox when He died on a cross—how God became human so He could die as a human, to redeem His own creation. He had to do that. There was nobody else who could save us. If Jesus was anybody else besides God, we’re lost.”

Bill did not end there. He followed with other paradoxes, like the baptism of the Holy Ghost which was introduced into the church on the day of Pentecost;⁴⁵⁸ death to our old nature (our sins and our own ideas) so that our new nature can grow in Christ;⁴⁵⁹ and finally the Rapture of the church (the Bride of Christ whisked away to the wedding supper of the Lamb).⁴⁶⁰ Among these paradoxes, he included his own ministry of visions, discernment, healing, miracles, and prophecy.

⁴⁵⁸ Acts 2

⁴⁵⁹ Romans 6:6; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:20-24; Colossians 3:9-10

⁴⁶⁰ 1 Corinthians 15:50-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 19:9

BECAUSE DOUGLAS McHUGHES was losing his eyesight to an incurable disease, he asked his brother Glenn to drive him from California to Arizona for this hunting trip with William Branham. Before they left, their mother showed them some tumors that were growing between her toes. She said, “If you get a chance, ask Brother Branham to pray for me that God will remove these tumors.”

Douglas said, “Mother, I’m determined not to bother Brother Branham with our problems. I know he goes to the wilderness to relax from the pressures of his meetings, so I don’t want to say anything or do anything that might intrude on his privacy.”

On Thursday, February 27, 1964, over a dozen men gathered at Bill’s usual winter campsite in the Sunset Peak area northeast of Tucson. Most of these men Bill already knew—like Roy Roberson, Banks Wood, Wallace McAnally, and Roy Borders. A few of these men he met for the first time that morning, which included Douglas McHughes. They spent over an hour

setting up camp, and then they divided into small hunting groups and hiked in different directions. That evening they sat in folding chairs around the campfire and listened to Bill tell them about the seven angels that had met him last year on this very mountain. There was plenty of mesquite wood to feed into the fire, which was burning near the base of two boulders that leaned against one another on the gravel floor of the canyon. Fifty feet behind these boulders the wall of the canyon rose to about 100 feet high. The cliff was formed of sandstone, layered into pinkish ribbons that were sprinkled with imbedded pebbles. The cliff formed a wide semicircle around the campers. Basically their camp was tucked into a nook in the cliff face, sort of like a shallow boxed canyon.

On Saturday Bill took Banks Wood as his hunting partner. They went in the same direction Bill had gone last year when the seven angels had met him. While they were hiking up the long, steep slope of a hill, Bill looked back and noticed how red Banks' face was. Wondering if the climb might be too strenuous for his

friend, Bill stopped and waited for him to catch up; and then he asked Banks how he felt.

Banks said, "I can climb this hill all right, but I am worried about my wife. When I left home, she was sick."

Bill turned to face the trail again. Before he took another step, he felt the presence of the angel of the Lord and heard a voice say, "*Pick up that rock and throw it into the air.*" Stooping, he grabbed a fist-sized rock near his foot and, with an underhand swing, tossed the rock straight up. When it came down, he said, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Something big is fixing to happen.'"

Banks asked, "What is it, Brother Branham? Does this mean my wife is going to be healed?"

"I don't know exactly, but I do know that within 24 hours you will see the glory of God."

By Saturday night, not all of the hunters had shot a javelina hog. Still, no one wanted to hunt on the next day. Sunday morning, March 1, 1964, dawned chilly and clear, without a wisp of wind to stir the mesquite leaves around the camp. By the time the sun had

arched over the edge of the canyon wall, the day had warmed comfortably. After breakfast everyone began the processes of disassembling the camp. No one seemed to be in a hurry to leave. Douglas McHughes took out his 8mm movie camera and filmed the activity, resting his elbows on the hood of Banks Wood's pickup to steady his camera. Not far away Bill sat in a folding chair under the shade of a mesquite tree. He had on his reading glasses and was using a screwdriver to adjust the sighting scope on somebody's rifle. Suddenly he looked up and said, "Brother McHughes, will you come here for a minute?"

Surprised by this request, Douglas McHughes clicked off his camera, and walked over to the mesquite tree. Bill took off his glasses and said, "Your mother lives in California. She is about the same age as I am, and she has something wrong with her feet. She has tumors between her toes and she is scheduled to have them surgically removed. Brother McHughes, it is: Thus saith the Lord, 'She will not have that surgery'."

Everyone in camp had stopped what they were doing and now they were listening to Bill. He continued, "I see a heavy-set doctor examining your eyes. I hear him say you have a viral infection in them. He has been treating your eyes for two years, and now he can do nothing else for you. He says you are going to lose your eyesight, but it is: Thus saith the Lord, 'You won't lose your sight.'"

As peculiar as it sounds, one of the hunters chose that moment to blow on his rabbit whistle. The screeching noise echoed off of the canyon wall behind them. Bill reached into his shirt pocket and pulled out his own rabbit whistle, blowing on it with a lung-full of air. Then he slapped his leg and laughed, relieving the tension that had stopped everyone from moving. The campers returned to their tasks. Billy Paul was removing the tent poles from his tent. Setting down the rifle he was adjusting, Bill picked up a shovel and walked over to the campfire, which was still smoldering. After spreading one shovel full of dirt on the dying embers, he dropped the shovel and said to Roy Roberson, "Something is fixing to happen. Don't

get excited or frightened. Just get out of the way, quick.”

As Roy Roberson scrambled away from that spot, a screaming sound made everyone else look up. Bill took off his hat and held it tightly in his hands. A funnel of wind came straight down into the canyon. It didn’t touch the canyon floor, but stopped a few feet above Bill’s head, shearing off the tops of the nearest mesquite trees. With a boom that sounded like thunder, the whirlwind rose above the canyon, then came down again, this time nearer the canyon wall. The sandstone cliff exploded, showering the camp site with dust and small stones. A third time the whirlwind rose and descended; and then it ascended straight up into the sky, sounding like a clap of thunder as it left the earth.

When the dust cleared, Bill looked up at the canyon wall. The whirlwind had removed a portion of the cliff face about 3 feet deep, 20 feet wide and 40 feet high, exposing the light pink of un-weathered sandstone beneath. Putting his cowboy hat back on his head, Bill stooped and picked up paper plates, napkins, and other light objects that the whirlwind had scattered around

the camp site. The other men helped him. As Bill worked, he noticed that all the rocks blown from the cliff face were triangular in shape, like three-sided pyramids. After the camp site was clean, he took his .22 rifle and went for a walk. When he returned, he leaned his rifle against a mesquite tree, and then walked over to Douglas McHughes, who was standing next to the cold campfire by the big rock. Poking a friendly elbow into McHughes’ ribs, he asked, “How are those eyes feeling now?”

“Brother Branham, they’ve stopped hurting, and for the first time on this trip I don’t have to wear my sunglasses.”

Bill nodded, knowingly. “When I was talking to you about your mother, do you know how I knew those details?”

“Not really.”

“I saw your mother sitting beside you. I saw her pull off her stocking and show you the tumors between her toes. I heard her say, ‘If you get a chance, ask Brother Branham to pray for me.’ Right after that, the angel of the Lord stood between you and me and said,

‘Separate from these men. I’ve got something to tell you.’”

Roy Roberson was standing nearby, listening to this. He asked, “What is it, Brother Branham? What did the Lord tell you?”

“That whirlwind was a prophetic sign. Thus saith the Lord, ‘The hour is here. Judgments will start to strike the earth, beginning on the west coast of America’.”

Twenty-seven days later, it happened just like he prophesied it would. On Friday, March 27, 1964, a massive earthquake struck Alaska at 5:36 in the afternoon. With a magnitude of 9.2 on the Richter scale, it was the strongest earthquake ever to strike North America. For many minutes a force equivalent to thousands of atomic bombs shook Alaska’s southern coast. The epicenter was located 75 miles (120 kilometers) southeast of Anchorage, near the shores of Prince William’s Sound. Crackling through the earth at thousands of miles per hour, the shock wave sliced, churned, and ruptured the land in a 500 mile arc of destruction. Chunks of highways rose or fell as much as 30 feet. Houses split apart, some falling into the sea.

This earthquake damaged thirty blocks of Anchorage’s downtown business district. At the same time nearby mountains shed their snow in massive avalanches. Next, a tsunami swept in from the ocean. When the ocean floor rose and fell, it sent a gigantic wave crashing upon the shore. This wave destroyed hundreds of fishing boats in Alaskan harbors. Some boats were carried inland to be shattered by rocks and trees, or left intact on city streets; other boats were washed out to sea, never to be seen again. Considering the devastation that this earthquake delivered, relatively few people were killed, due in large part to the time the quake struck. (By 5:36 p.m. most people were in their homes.) Out of a population of 200,000 in 1964, only 15 Alaskans died from the earthquake proper, and another 110 died from the resulting tsunami. Conversely, the property damage was enormous, estimated at 311 million dollars. To put this amount into perspective, Alaska’s agricultural, manufacturing, and mining industries combined, only grossed 67 million dollars in 1964.

The Alaskan earthquake happened on the Friday before Easter. It is ironic (or perhaps prophetic) that when Jesus was crucified on that same day some nineteen centuries earlier, “*the earth did quake, and the rocks rent*” also.⁴⁶¹

APRIL OF 1964 was a busy month for the evangelist. During the first week of April, William Branham preached five times in Louisville, Mississippi. On the ninth through the twelfth he spoke in Birmingham, Alabama. On April 15 he visited Tampa, Florida for the first time. In Tampa he preached five times in four days, beginning with “Christ is Identified the Same in All Generations,” and ending that week with a sermon he called “The Trial.”

In his sermon, “The Trial,” Bill turned McKay Auditorium into a court room, and he summoned his listeners to serve as jurors. The case being tried before the court was: The world versus the promises of God. Satan was the prosecuting attorney representing the view of the world. Satan’s three star witnesses were

Mr. Unbeliever, Mr. Skeptic, and Mr. Impatience. The attorney defending the promises of God was the Holy Spirit. The particular promises under scrutiny in this trial are found in Mark 16:17-18, “*And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*” Of course the three witnesses for the prosecution gave many reasons why these promises of God can’t be trusted. Then the defense attorney called his three witnesses to testify—the prophets Noah, Moses, and Joshua. They testified how God kept every promise He ever made to them.

As he approached the end of his sermon, Bill said, “Mr. Prosecutor, I could call a thousand witnesses here this afternoon who would testify that God keeps His Word. There is a genuine Holy Ghost meeting and a genuine power of God! There is a genuine promise that they shall recover, when believers lay hands on the sick. Jesus said, ‘As it was in the days of Sodom,

⁴⁶¹ Matthew 27:50-51

so shall it be in the coming of the Son of man.’ Notice the angel of the Lord who came in the form of a man. He had His back turned to the tent, yet He told Abraham what Sarah was thinking. Jesus said it would repeat. Now, if I have told the truth, let God confirm that to be the truth. Let the God who made the promise vindicate it today. I challenge you to think about your sickness or your affliction, and pray that God will reveal the secret of your heart. Would I dare to make such a challenge if I wasn’t standing exactly on what the Scripture says? I want this court to see that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and that He keeps His promises. He promised that He would be revealed in the last days as the Son of man.”

After a moment’s pause, Bill pointed to a man in the middle of the auditorium, “There is a man sitting here suffering with hemorrhoids. I have never seen you before in my life. That’s your wife sitting next to you. She’s suffering from a cyst on her head. Do you believe God can tell me who you are? If God is still the Word, the Word knows the secret of the heart. You are Mr. and Mrs. Hunt. If that’s right, raise your

hands.” Mr. and Mrs. Hunt each raised a hand high enough for the audience to see.

Immediately Bill pointed to someone closer to him. “There is a man sitting here with his head down, crying and praying for himself and for his wife. She isn’t here this afternoon. She’s suffering. I’m a stranger to you, is that right? Your wife has a female trouble. Your name is Mr. Smith. Do you believe that God will make her well? If that’s right, wave your hand up and down like this.” While Mr. Smith waved, Bill said to his audience, “I challenge you to believe that Jesus Christ is revealed in the form of Son of man in human flesh...”

He pointed again at someone in the crowd. “Here is a woman who suffers with high blood pressure. Do you believe that God could tell me who you are? They call you Daisy. Believe now with all your heart and Jesus Christ will give you what you desire.”

Again he discerned, “Here is a man with a burden on his heart for his son who has diabetes. That’s your wife who started weeping, sitting next to you. She’s got a burden for her sister who has heart

complications. Your names are Mr. and Mrs. Sickles. If that is right, and if I am a stranger to you, stand up.” The Sickles stood.

Bill said, “What is it? The fulfilling of the Word of God in the last days! Prosecutor, I want you to know that the Word of God is true. God told me that 33 years ago and I’ve waited all this time; but it’s fulfilled right here this afternoon. God keeps His Word! Now the jury has to make up its mind. Do you believe God is not guilty and that He does keep His Word? The way you act from now on will show what your verdict is.”

It was a masterful sermon—one that could be extrapolated to include any number of Bible characters as witnesses for the defense. But the real strength of this sermon was in the lingering question it left for each listener to answer. What about your time in the witness box? Can you testify that God keeps His promises today?

While Bill was in Tampa, Florida, Lee Vayle and Pearry Green, who were both attending his meetings, talked to him about a booklet Lee wanted to write—a

booklet he planned to title *Twentieth Century Prophet*. The first part of this booklet would discuss the end-time scriptures about a prophet-messenger forerunning the second coming of Jesus Christ; and the last part would show how William Branham’s ministry fulfilled those scriptures. If Bill would give them permission, Lee Vayle would write the booklet and Pearry Green would finance its publication.

Bill said they could do it. Then Bill handed Lee a box containing the unedited transcripts of his ten sermons on the seven church ages. He said, “While you’re at it, see what you can do with this.”

Ever since Bill had preached on the seven church ages in 1960, he had wanted to put those teachings into a book. His recorded sermons on the church ages covered 23 hours. In 1962 Ruth Sumner of Tifton, Georgia, sat behind a typewriter and transcribed the entire series, stopping the tape recorder after every sentence so she could type it out word-for-word. After several weeks of meticulous work, she handed Bill the transcripts of his ten sermons that tallied together numbered around 800 pages.

That was a good start, but he knew it was only one step in the long process of writing a book. Now he needed someone with good English skills who could edit the transcripts, tidy up his grammar, organize his presentation, and work with him on adding any new material that seemed appropriate. In December of 1963 he had asked Anna Jeanne Price if she would do it for him. Anna Jeanne was the daughter of Jack Moore, Bill's long-time friend from Shreveport, Louisiana. For many years Anna Jeanne had worked as an editor for *The Voice of Healing* magazine, which had sharpened her writing skills, as well as giving her some knowledge of Bill's faith-healing ministry. In 1950 she had helped Gordon Lindsay put together the book *William Branham: A Man sent from God*. Anna Jeanne had the utmost confidence in Bill as a servant of God. However, when she read the transcripts of his sermons on the seven church ages, she decided she could not do justice to the depth of Biblical teachings they contained.

Bill had been very disappointed when Anna Jeanne said she couldn't help him. At that point, not knowing

who else he could ask, he considered abandoning the project. Now, in Tampa, Florida, he explained to Lee Vayle and Pearry Green the kind of book he had in mind. After reading through the transcripts, Lee Vayle offered to turn them into a book, providing Bill agreed to proofread what he wrote. Bill willingly agreed to this condition.

THROUGHOUT 1964 William Branham preached on two major themes. All across North America he taught people who Jesus really is; and how they can recognize His presence. Ever since he preached "Christ is the Mystery of God Revealed," his main theme had become the revelation of Jesus Christ—that Jesus was God in flesh, and now He is God in Spirit-form, showing Himself present among His people. His secondary theme was this—God always announces a major transition of history through a prophet,⁴⁶² and there will be a minority of Christians who will recognize this, and act appropriately. William

⁴⁶² Amos 3:7; Hebrews 1:1-2; Revelation 19:10

Branham believed he was living in a transitional period where the seventh church age was ending. He didn't know how much time was left for the Gentiles, but he believed that the moment the Bride is caught away to her wedding supper, at that moment the age of the Gentiles will end, and then Jesus Christ will reveal Himself to the Jews in Israel.

Passionately, Bill preached these two major themes from California to Florida. Over two dozen times he spoke on the deity of Jesus Christ, in sermons with titles like: "When Their Eyes Were Opened" (referring to the two men who walked to Emmaus with Jesus after His resurrection,) "Then Jesus Came and Called" (on the resurrection of Lazarus by the command of Jesus,) "A Greater Than Solomon Is Here" (comparing King Solomon and King Jesus—the first man was a great king, but the second man was the King of kings,) "Testimony on the Sea" (where the disciples of Jesus compared notes on what they had seen and heard,) "God Identifying Himself by His Characteristics," "Identified Christ of All Ages," "Presence of God

Unrecognized," "Who is Jesus?," "The Mighty God Unveiled," and "Identified Masterpiece of God."

Bill sprinkled his second major theme through many of these sermons, but sometimes he emphasized it in sermons with titles like: "The Voice of the Sign" and "Scriptural Signs of the Time."

In "The Voice of the Sign" Bill showed how God vindicates His prophets with supernatural signs, but every sign also has a voice behind it. The supernatural sign catches the eye, draws attention, and inspires awe; but it is the voice *behind* the sign that is the most important part. The voice behind the sign delivers the Word of God; and that word, if believed, brings eternal life to the believer.

For one example Bill used the young Jewish Pharisee named Saul of Tarsus. Initially Saul fought against Jesus Christ. Saul was traveling to Damascus in order to arrest Christians when he saw a supernatural light above him. That light got his attention; but if that was all he experienced, he would not have known what it meant. A voice spoke from that light and said, "*Saul, Saul, why do You persecute*

me?” Saul asked, “Who are You, Lord?”⁴⁶³ When the voice answered “*I am Jesus*,” Saul was astonished! He had been so sure he was right; but now, because of that voice, he knew he had been wrong all along. By believing the “voice of the sign,” Saul’s life turned towards the truth and his soul was saved. Saul became Paul the apostle. His conversion became the spiritual pattern for every believer to follow through the ages—especially today.

In June of 1964, after his children got out of school, Bill again took his family to Jeffersonville for the summer. Preaching at Branham Tabernacle, he explained his dual themes in more detail than he could at other churches around the country. His sermon “The Unveiling of God,” emphasized the deity of Jesus Christ. In his sermon “Recognizing Your Day and Its Message,” He explained how people can walk in tune with what God is specifically doing in their age.

Bill scheduled a week of special meetings for the middle of July, planning to preach for seven nights on the mysteries hidden in the seven trumpets of Revelation 8, 9, and 11. He planned to take a trumpet

each night, the same way he did when he preached the seven seals, expecting God to reveal each trumpet to him when he came to it. As he prepared himself for these meetings with study and prayer, the Holy Spirit warned him not to dig too deeply into the trumpets. Obediently, he canceled these special meetings. On Sunday morning, July 19, speaking in Branham Tabernacle, he explained why in a sermon he called “Feast of the Trumpets.”

In the Old Testament, the Feast of Trumpets was the fifth of the seven feasts that decorated the Jewish year. They are in order: Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Weeks (Pentecost), Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles. Each feast celebrates some aspect of Jewish religious life, but (looking more deeply) each feast actually symbolizes some aspect in the life of Jesus Christ. The Feast of Trumpets came at the end of September, or the first part of October (depending of the phase of the moon), and it was followed by the Day of Atonement nine days later. During the Feast of Trumpets, the people of Israel rested, blew trumpets

⁴⁶³ Acts 9:1-16; 22:1-16; 26:9-18

and offered sacrifices, seeking God's favor.⁴⁶⁴ Bill taught that the purpose of the Feast of Trumpets was to call the Jews to their Day of Atonement. Then he placed this fact into the context of the overall plan of salvation. The Jews rejected their Messiah when Jesus walked among them on earth. That gave the Gentiles an opportunity to be saved. However, the day is fast approaching when 144,000 Jews will recognize their mistake. God will use the two witnesses of Revelation 11 to accomplish this miracle. These two men will, among other things, reveal the mysteries hidden in the seven trumpets of Revelation 8, 9, and 11—and when they do, they will reveal Jesus Christ to the Jewish remnant. Therefore, the revelation of the seven trumpets will call modern Israel to their true Day of Atonement. To put it another way, the seven trumpets are to the Jews what the seven seals are to the Gentiles—the final illuminating revelation of Jesus Christ. Bill said that is why he couldn't explain more about the seven trumpets. They don't apply to the Gentile church at all. They are meant for the Jewish remnant,

so only they can benefit from the unveiling of those seven mysteries.

In his sermon "Masterpiece," preached on July 5, 1964, Bill described the statue that Michelangelo carved of Moses. Michelangelo began this project in 1505 and completed it 40 years later. It began as a thought in the sculptor's mind and ended as a marble statue of such exquisite detail that the tendons bulge on the back of Moses' hands. After Michelangelo chiseled the last burr off of his masterpiece, in a fit of inspiration he struck the perfect thigh with his mallet and cried "Speak!" A chunk of marble flew from his statue, leaving it with a single flaw.

Bill said, "To my way of thinking, that flaw is what makes it a masterpiece." Using this story as a form for his foundation, he poured in concrete examples from the Bible. God also planned a work of art. He fashioned a universe of atoms and molecules, nebulae and stars, and then made planets, including the earth, where He created animals and plants, designing a beautiful garden. Finally He created a man, Adam, who was God's first masterpiece. Then, acting on His

⁴⁶⁴ Leviticus 23:23-25; Numbers 29:1-6

own inspiration, God struck Adam's side and removed a rib, which He used to make a bride for His first son. Because she was a byproduct of the original creation, Eve had a weakness—doubt. She disbelieved God's plan. This became the flaw in God's first masterpiece, the flaw that allowed death to enter the world. But wait—it was for a purpose...

Thousands of years later Jesus Christ was born. He was a perfect child—God's ultimate masterpiece. Thirty-three years later God told Peter, James, and John, "This is My beloved Son. When He speaks, listen to Him."⁴⁶⁵ Shortly thereafter, God struck His masterpiece, allowing Jesus to die on the cross, thus fulfilling the prophecy, *"Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to*

*his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."*⁴⁶⁶

When Jesus rose from the dead, He came back to earth in spirit form to collect a Bride through seven church ages. The Bride of Christ is the flaw that makes God's artwork a masterpiece. Someday soon the Great Sculptor will repair that chunk knocked loose from His perfect creation. Then the Bridegroom and Bride will return to an ideal world, better than the Garden of Eden.

Bill expanded this theme on December 5, 1964. In his sermon "Identified Masterpiece of God," he said, "Our experience is not to match some creed, some dogma, some church denomination, but it is to match God's Word—Jesus Christ. Jesus was so perfect that He inspired the Sculptor to smite Him on Calvary. There is the real masterpiece. Michelangelo striking his statue of Moses was only a type. If Jesus had just lived a good life, He would have been like some of these people who preach a social gospel today. Jesus was a prophet, but He was more than a prophet. He

⁴⁶⁵ Matthew 17:5

⁴⁶⁶ Isaiah 53:4-6 (NKJV)

was God. He was Emmanuel. When God smote His Son at Calvary, that is what made Him a masterpiece to me and you. If He had not been smitten, it wouldn't have mattered how many dead people He raised, or how great He had preached. He was the only man that ever stood on the earth who God could smite for the rest of them. That perfect One was smitten for the imperfect ones. The whole creation that fell through Adam was redeemed through Jesus Christ.

“God’s masterpiece stood the test. How did He do it? He did it by the Word, saying, ‘It is written: ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’⁴⁶⁷ Oh, Christian friend, put on the whole armor of God. Don’t stand back with some little idea of some creed, or something that you’re standing by. Put on the whole armor of God when you go to fight against the enemy, like our Lord did. He showed how the weakest Christian can defeat Satan just by using the Word. Jesus had powers. He could have smote Satan any way He wanted to. But He didn’t use it. He just took the Word and defeated

Satan with it. Jesus said, ‘It is written,’ ‘It is written,’ everywhere, ‘It is written.’ So He defeated Satan by the Word of God.”

On August 2, 1964, Bill preached “Future Home of the Heavenly Bridegroom and the Earthly Bride.” He showed how the Bride’s future home will not be some dreamland in the sky; it will be right here on earth, although not the thorny, mosquito-plagued continents we know today. Rather, it will be a purified earth, burnt over and replanted into the image of the original garden in Eden. Just as there are three stages to the salvation of a person, so there are three stages to the salvation of the earth. The first stage of a man’s salvation is when he repents and is baptized in water. During the second stage he is sanctified when he lives his life in obedience to God’s Word. Finally, the baptism of the Holy Spirit fills him with the fire of God’s spirit, making him a new creation in Christ Jesus. Now he is born again, and he takes on the nature of his heavenly parent. Likewise, the earth has three stages to her redemption. She received her baptism in the days of Noah, when a flood covered her

⁴⁶⁷ Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13

completely. She was sanctified when Jesus, the living Word, dripped His blood upon her soil. Soon the earth will receive her baptism of fire after the Great Tribulation. Then the spirit of God will abide upon this world for a thousand years of peace and prosperity.

Bill also explained the holy city of God that John saw descending from heaven to the earth.⁴⁶⁸ John said this city didn't need any outside light source, because the glory of Jesus Christ was its light.⁴⁶⁹ The only way this could be possible is if the holy city is shaped like a pyramid, with the throne of God at its peak. Jesus Christ will be the headstone of that great pyramid, fulfilling Psalms 118:22 and 23: "*The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes,*" and Zechariah 4:7: "*...he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.*"

⁴⁶⁸ Revelation 21:2

⁴⁶⁹ Revelation 21:23

Chapter 93

Eliezer's Mission

1965

DURING THE FALL of 1964 William Branham bought a license to hunt a cougar. In January of 1965 he drove to the mountainous region in the northeastern corner of Arizona where he connected with a young man named Dawson Riley. Dawson made his living as a hunting outfitter and guide, specializing in tracking mountain lions. These giant cats live in the mountainous regions of the West. They are often called cougars in the northern states and pumas in the southern states. Cougars are known for their cunning intellect and elusive ways, making them a real

challenge to find, unless a hunter uses dogs to track the lion's scent.

Riding horses and leading packhorses, Bill and Dawson rode into the mountains and set up a base camp. The next day they rode their horses through several small valleys, searching for some sign of a cougar's presence. Early on the morning of the third day, the dogs picked up a scent. At first the hunters didn't know if it was a cougar until Dawson found a place by a creek where its paws left some tracks in passing. All morning they tracked that lion, following its trail through twenty miles of heavily timbered valleys. By late afternoon the cougar had moved into higher country. Here the dry, rocky ground made it more difficult for the dogs to follow its scent. For a while they lost its trail at a place where a valley branched into several steep canyons. Briefly the hunters split up, each taking a different canyon to see if they could locate the lions trail again. Dawson took all four dogs with him.

Halfway up his canyon Bill stopped so he could use binoculars to study the ledges above him. One side of

the canyon was still sunny; the other was steeped in shadows and patches of snow. He examined the shadows carefully, hoping to see movement. He spotted a coyote, but he wasn't hunting coyotes today.

The shadows were lengthening as the sun sank towards the horizon. Where the canyon slopes had sufficient dirt, ponderosa pine and pinyon pine trees dominated the area. But there were many places too rocky to allow much vegetation. Dismounting, he looked for tracks in the sand of the dry creek bottom. Suddenly, the shrill scream of a cougar pierced the afternoon, quickly rising and falling in pitch. The scream echoed down from the upper canyon, telling Bill he was on the right trail.

A shiver went down his spine. It wasn't from fear. Rather, it came from recognizing that something extraordinary had just happened. He remembered the poem he had written when he was twelve years old.

I am lonesome, oh, so lonesome for that far away
Southwest,

Where the shadows fall the deepest over the mountain crest.

I can see a lurking coyote all around the purple haze;

I can hear a lobo hollering down where the longhorns graze.

And somewhere up a canyon I can hear a lion whine,

In those far off Catalina Mountains at the Arizona line.

Over forty years later, here he was in a canyon near the Arizona State border with New Mexico, listening to a mountain lion scream. He didn't think of it as a coincidence, nor as a dream-come-true. He felt like it was another confirmation that God was guiding his life, and had been ever since he was a boy. Before the sun settled below the mountain peaks, Bill shot that lion. (Later he would learn it was the largest cougar ever killed in Arizona up to that time.) He skinned it carefully because he wanted to have it stuffed and mounted. He thought this cougar would make a fine hunting trophy to exhibit in his new den room.

Recently Bill and Meda had purchased a house on the northern fringe of Tucson near the Santa Catalina Mountains. It was a modest, three-bedroom house with a flat roof, situated on a one-acre lot that was covered with cactus. The hillside lot had a nice view of Tucson to the south and a beautiful view of the mountains to the north. Currently his family was still living in the duplex apartments on Park Avenue. They needed to do some remodeling to their new home before they could move, including the building of an addition on the west side of the house. Banks Wood came to Tucson to help Roy Borders build this addition. It would be a study or den—a single room large enough to hold all of Bill's hunting trophies. This den room would be separate from the house, attached only by a breezeway. The construction plans called for large picture windows to face the northern mountains. The cougar he had just shot would fit nicely with the rustic décor he was planning for his new den.

DEMOS SHAKARIAN, president of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, had scheduled a convention in Phoenix, Arizona, for the third week of January, 1965. Demos asked Carl Williams, who lived in Phoenix, to set up this convention and arrange all the details. Carl Williams was the organization's International Secretary/Treasurer, as well as the President of its Phoenix chapter. Carl wanted William Branham to speak at this year's convention, just as he had done many times in the past. But Carl knew that not everyone liked this idea. Some of the board members thought William Branham offended too many people when he preached. At their board meeting before the convention one of the directors proposed a resolution that the same convention couldn't have the same speaker two years in a row. Another director seconded the motion. Carl Williams said, "I know what you're up to. You don't want William Branham back at the Phoenix convention anymore. But I want you to understand something—if you take Brother Branham out of the Phoenix convention, then I'm gone too."

Because Carl's management skills had helped the organization get out of debt, he had enough influence to get his way—at least this time. The motion was withdrawn.

Carl Williams had a good reason for his unwavering loyalty to Bill's ministry. During the 1940s, Carl suffered from arthritis in his knees. Eventually his condition became so painful that he could only walk using crutches. Late in that decade he attended Bill's first faith-healing service in Phoenix. On that wonderful night Bill's sermon inspired Carl to believe Jesus Christ could heal him from arthritis. He hobbled forward and stood with others in a prayer-line, awaiting his turn. When Bill prayed for him in Jesus' name, he threw away his crutches and walked around the sanctuary, free from pain for the first time in many years. He had walked normally ever since, feeling only the normal aches and twinges that bother every older person occasionally.

After the board meeting ended, Carl Williams phoned Bill to ask him if he would speak at their Phoenix convention, January 17 through the 23. Carl

didn't say anything about the attempt some of the directors had made to keep him out.

"Yes," Bill replied, "I'll be happy to speak for you. What days do you want me?"

"I have you scheduled for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings, and again on Saturday morning and Sunday night."

Before hanging up, Bill said, "Brother Carl, I appreciate you standing up for me like that."

Recently, Meda Branham had given her husband a new Bible. For many years Bill had used a Scofield Study Bible (King James Version) with the words of Jesus printed in red letters. Bill didn't agree with all of Dr. Scofield's notes, but he found some of them helpful. Mostly he liked this Bible because he had started using it early in his evangelistic ministry in 1946, and by now it had become as familiar to him as an old friend. He knew where to find many of his favorite verses as much by their location on a page as by looking at the reference numbers. He had carried this Bible with him all over North America, down into Mexico, across the Atlantic to England and

Scandinavia, through Europe, down into Africa, and over into India. It felt as comfortable in his hands as an old, well-worn pair of gloves—a pair that should have been discarded long ago in favor of a new pair. He had simply worn this Bible out. Now he had to open it carefully or loose pages would fall on the floor. Several times, Meda suggested he get a new Bible, but he was reluctant to part with his old friend. In a burst of inspiration, Meda bought him a new Scofield Study Bible as a Christmas present—a Bible that was exactly the same as his old one.

Bill took both Bibles with him to the Full Gospel Business Men's convention in Phoenix, but during the week and on Saturday morning he continued to use his old Bible when he preached. On Saturday night in his hotel room, still using his old Bible, he found his text for the next day and wrote down the reference numbers in his notes: John 16:20-21, which begins: "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice. . .*"

On Sunday morning the Full Gospel Business Men's convention was held in the Ramada Inn's large

banquet hall. When Bill left his hotel room that morning, he decided to finally make the switch to his new Bible. Leaving his old Bible on the desk, he picked up his new Bible and his notes, and went downstairs to join the convention. After several songs, Carl Williams turned the service over to his friend. Bill stood behind the podium and greeted the men and women gathered in the banquet hall. Then he asked them to turn in their Bibles to John 16 and follow along as he read verses 20 and 21. Bill flipped through the book of John until he found the beginning of the 16th chapter, nestled where he expected to find it in the lower right hand corner of the right hand page. Turning the page, he found verse 20 and read, “*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that...*” Realizing this was not the Scripture he wanted, he apologized to his audience while he turned back a page to get his bearings. There was the heading for the 16th chapter of John in the bottom right hand corner of the page. But when he carefully turned that page forward, the new left hand page didn’t match with

what he expected to find. Flustered, he turned the pages back and forth a few times, and then said to his audience, “My wife gave me a new Bible, and it has this page printed wrong.”

A Catholic priest named Bishop Stanley sat near the podium, wearing a red robe adorned with elaborate vestments. He was the Archbishop for the Chaldean Catholic church in the United States. Bishop Stanley rose from his chair, walked over to the podium, and handed his Bible to Bill, saying, “This is God’s handiwork. There is a reason why it was done. God will show you the reason. It is wonderful.”

Thanking Bishop Stanley, Bill took the Bible, found the verse he wanted and read aloud, “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.*” Closing the borrowed book, he handed it back to the priest.

In his sermon, which he called “Birth Pains,” Bill compared our world to a pregnant woman who is laboring to deliver her baby. The woman experiences violent contractions that grow more intense the closer she gets to delivery. Likewise our world has experienced some violent contractions in her twentieth century—principally World War I, followed by World War II. Now that we have atomic bombs, humanity won’t survive a third such war—at least not civilization as we know it now. But such a day is coming. The book of Revelation calls this the great tribulation, or the winepress of the wrath of God, and it includes the seven vials full of the wrath of God that seven angels will pour out upon the earth.⁴⁷⁰ It is the time when God will mete out vengeance on all those people who rejected or perverted His Word. Yet, out of this final contraction a new earth will be born—a purified earth, fit for Jesus Christ (the Promised Son) to live on, and to reign with His Bride (those born-again Christians from every church age.)

Although the Full Gospel Business Men’s convention would continue for several more nights, after the Sunday session ended, Bill drove his family back to Tucson because his children had to go to school the next day. On the way home, they stopped at a restaurant to eat supper. Bill was still thinking about the misprint in his new Bible. Meda felt embarrassed because she thought she had given him a flawed Bible. She said she had never been more nervous in her life than she was during those few minutes he spent searching for his text. Now in the restaurant, Bill opened his new Bible to examine it more closely. To his surprise, he found it was not a misprint after all; rather, two of the ultra-thin pages had stuck together so perfectly that they looked like one page. Bill recalled what the bishop had told him: “This is God’s handiwork. There is a reason why it was done. God will show you the reason. It is wonderful.” Suddenly, a story in Luke came into his mind. Like a lightning bolt, the reason struck him.

On Monday Bill drove back to Phoenix to hear Dr. Reed speak at the Full Gospel Business Men’s

⁴⁷⁰ Revelation 7:14; 14:19; 15:7 and all of chapter 16

convention. While talking to Carl Williams before the meeting, Bill shared what the Lord had shown him last night at the restaurant. Impressed, Carl asked Bill to share this with everyone at the convention. He could have 10 minutes at the podium before Dr. Reed brought the evening message. So, on Monday night Bill again stood behind the podium, addressing this interdenominational group of Christian businessmen and their wives. After reminding them of yesterday's funny little incident, he pointed them to Luke 4:16-30. When Jesus visited His home town of Nazareth, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath. A rabbi handed Jesus the book of Isaiah. Jesus unrolled the scroll to chapter 61 and read part of the first sentence: "*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.*" Then Jesus rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the minister, and said to those in the room, "*This day this*

Scripture is fulfilled in your ears." Bill pointed out that Jesus read only a portion of that Scripture. In our modern Bible, the first sentence in Isaiah 61 fills verses 1, 2, and 3. Jesus read all of verse one, but just the first part of verse two. Why didn't He finish reading that sentence? He stopped because the rest of the sentence did not apply to that moment in history; it would not apply until the end-time. But today, it does apply. Some day Jesus Christ must proclaim, "*The day of vengeance of our God,*" as Isaiah 61:2 prophesied.

"Isn't that exactly what had happened yesterday?" Bill asked his audience.

He quoted Luke 17:30 and stressed again that he believed he was living in the time that Jesus prophesied would come—the day when the Son of man is revealed. If that was true, then on Sunday night, January 24, 1965, in Phoenix, Arizona, "*the* Son of man" used "*a son of man*" to proclaim "*the day of vengeance of our God.*"

It took those two pages stuck together in his own Bible, and then borrowing a Bible from a priest, in order for Bill to see the connection between Isaiah

61:2 and Luke 4:17. Without equivocation, he said to his audience, “This day this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears!”

AFTER THE PHOENIX CONVENTION ended, Bill had two weeks at home before his next scheduled meeting, which would be in Flagstaff, Arizona, on February 6, 1965. Several things were on his mind at this time. Building his den occupied some of his thoughts, but it was not his biggest concern. During the planning stage he had to make a lot of decisions; but now he didn’t have much to do on his den except answer an occasional question. Banks Wood and Roy Borders were handling everything during the construction stage of the project.

Lately Bill was spending a lot of time trying to get his book about the seven church ages ready for publication. After he had given the transcripts to Lee Vayle in Tampa, Florida, he had talked to Lee on numerous occasions, sometimes on the phone, sometimes by sending him audio letters made on a

tape recorder, answering specific questions and offering general advice. Mostly Lee was on his own, researching background information and structuring the ten sermons into book form. During the last eight months of 1964 Pearry Green sent Lee Vayle \$48 a week to support him while he wrote; and Lee sent Bill approximately one completed chapter per month. Now, in January of 1965, the book was almost finished. Bill was spending many hours going over the manuscript, making additions and corrections. He was trusting Lee Vayle to make the grammar correct. Bill was trying his best to make the doctrine clear and precise.

There was one more thing on his mind during that last week of January, 1965. For many years men and women had asked him questions about marriage and divorce. Sometimes a Christian man would ask him if he could divorce his unbelieving wife and marry another woman. Sometimes a Christian woman would ask him if she could divorce her unbelieving husband and marry another man. The personal details varied widely, but when he melted the details down, they

pooled into the same basic questions. Many Christians seemed confused about divorce, and in their confusion they sometimes made mistakes. The Lord had revealed to him the truth about marriage and divorce back in June of 1963, while he was returning home from Hot Springs, Arkansas. At that time the Holy Spirit told him to preach on the subject and record his sermon, but he kept putting it off, concerned that the truth might hurt many of his dearest friends who had made mistakes in that area of their lives. On the other hand, he could not disobey the leading of the Holy Spirit. Troubled by this dilemma, he felt pressed in his spirit to do something about it. One day, as he was driving toward his new home to inspect the progress on his den, he looked at the northern mountains not far away and his eyes focused on Finger Rock. Suddenly Bill heard the Holy Spirit whisper to him, “*Climb that mountain and I will talk to you there.*”

Obediently he drove north until he came to the parking lot at the trail head for Pima Canyon. He hiked the trail for half a mile before he reached the entrance to the canyon. There the trail split, one path continuing

up Pima Canyon, and the other path rising toward Finger Rock. He took the path to Finger Rock. The trail rose steeply, and he was soon sweating from his effort. The many rocks along the slope glittered with flecks of mica. Little green gecko lizards darted from shade to shade. Yellow butterflies fluttered by. Palo Verde trees and various cacti clung to the lower slopes, but as he climbed higher, the darker-leafed pinyon pine trees dominated the available soil. He stopped high on the slope, near the base of the cliff that rose and blended into Finger Rock. The point of Finger Rock loomed hundreds of feet above him. Although Finger Rock was not the highest point on the ridge, it was unique and very noticeable. It looked like the fist of a human hand with one finger pointing straight up into the sky. Bill sat on a boulder and looked out across the Tucson valley. To the east stood the Rincon Mountains and to the south he saw the Santa Rita Mountains, looking blue-green and hazy on the horizon. Bill located his new home just a few miles away. Then his mind returned to his purpose, and he prayed.

Bill believed that the marriage covenant was more serious than many people realized. He viewed it as a type of Jesus Christ and His Bride. The Old Testament foreshadowed this bond in many places. For example, King Solomon had many wives—one king, yet many queens, typing Jesus Christ and His church. Bill did not believe in polygamy among Christians. Although the Old Testament seems to condone multiple wives, Jesus set the record straight when He said “...*from the beginning it was not so.*” The pattern in Eden was the archetype for every Christian marriage to follow—one man married to one woman until one of them dies.⁴⁷¹ If they divorce, they have not sinned. However, if the divorced woman then marries another man, Jesus said she is living in adultery because she would have two husbands, even though she is only living with one.

People with marriage problems often asked Bill questions about divorce. Some of these questions were easier to answer than others. Perhaps the stickiest questions came from people who were divorced and then remarried before they became Christians. Bill

knew how closely some of these people followed his teachings. If he preached the truth about marriage and divorce, would some of these people dissolve their marriages so they could be right with God? Would he be responsible for breaking up families? This burden weighed upon him heavily as he sat on the slope directly beneath Finger Rock.

Suddenly he heard a noise like an approaching whirlwind. Looking up, he sucked in his breath in surprise. An amber sheet of flame was dropping from the sky. Before he could exhale, it covered the rock outcropping above him. Three times Bill watched that supernatural flame rise and settle again on Finger Rock. As it disappeared back into the heavens, the angel of the Lord spoke to him, giving him an answer to his question about marriage and divorce.

After he climbed down from Finger Rock, he was driving home when he noticed his car was low on gas. He stopped to fill his tank at the gas station owned by his friend Welch Evans. A young man who worked at the station said, “Brother Branham, you were up on that mountain an hour ago, weren’t you.”

⁴⁷¹ Roman 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16

“What do you mean, Ronnie? What did you see?”

“I can show you exactly where you were at.” Ronnie pointed to the line of mountain peaks north of the city. “You were up there by Finger Rock. I called mama and together we watched a bright reddish cloud go up and down. I told mama, ‘Brother Branham must be sitting up there somewhere, and God is talking to him’.”

Bill heard the same thing when his children came home from school. Some of the teachers let their children out of class to watch a fiery amber cloud hovering above Finger Rock. They watched it go up in the air and come down three times before it disappeared.

Calling Orman Neville in Jeffersonville, Bill scheduled special meetings to start Wednesday evening and run through Sunday, February 17 through 21, 1965. Returning to Indiana, he preached in this order: “A Man Running from the Presence of the Lord,” “The Seed Is Not Heir with the Shuck,” “This Day This Scripture Is Fulfilled,” (an expanded version of the testimony he gave in Phoenix), “God’s Chosen

Place of Worship,” “Marriage and Divorce,” and “Who Is This Melchisedec?”

On Sunday morning, February 21, 1965, he preached “Marriage and Divorce.” Bill knew he could only speak on this sensitive subject in Branham Tabernacle, where he had complete freedom of expression. Even then he worried about how plainly he must speak, and he chose his words carefully because of the women and children who were in his audience. During this sermon, Bill noted that Christians tend to view divorce in two different ways. Some people believe that a man can only be married once, unless his wife dies, in which case he is free to marry again. Other people believe that a man can divorce his wife and marry again, or the wife can divorce her husband and marry again, if the other spouse has committed adultery. Bill said that both schools of thought have some truth, but with either view it was possible to go too far out on a limb and fall off. As usual, legalism and Calvinism both miss the mark.⁴⁷² The truth rests in

⁴⁷² Calvinism (as William Branham used it here) is the liberal doctrine that argues once you claim you are saved by Jesus, you can live any kind of life you want to live, and no matter what sins you do, you can’t be lost.

the middle. He used his own marriage as an example. The law of God instructs him to remain faithful to his wife, but he doesn't stay true to her just because God said he must. He loves his wife so much that he doesn't want to do anything to hurt her, and that is why he remains faithful.

Next he read Matthew 19:1-9 where the Pharisees questioned Jesus about divorce. Jesus said that in the beginning God intended each man to have only one wife. Then the Pharisees asked Jesus why Moses introduced divorce. Jesus said it was because of the hardness of men's hearts, but from the beginning it was not so. Jesus said that any man who divorces his wife for any reason other than fornication causes her to commit adultery (Why? Because she'll marry again, giving her two husbands, even though she is just living with one.) Consequently, the man who marries a divorced woman is also committing adultery.

Bill talked at length about Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Because Eve was not in the original creation, she was susceptible to the devil's lies, which he told her through the serpent, (who in the beginning

was not a reptile, but an intelligent mammal, the so-called missing link between monkeys and humans.) By disobeying God's commandment and yielding to the serpent's advances, Eve committed adultery and brought death into the world. But we can't criticize Adam and Eve because every man and woman today has the same choice—a choice to be either a jewel in God's crown or a thorn in His foot.

Finally Bill came to his conclusion—the thing God told him that day on Finger Rock. He said, "I'm speaking to my group only; this message is only to them. Little children, I'm here to help you. I am your friend. You might think I'm speaking against you, but I love you. This is an awful strong thing. I didn't know how to bring it out. What will I do when I have good men and women in my congregation who have been married twice or three times? They got mixed up because someone taught them wrong. They didn't wait on the Lord. Jesus said, 'What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.' Not what some half-drunk magistrate or some backslidden preacher has joined together; I'm talking about what God has joined

together. When you have a direct revelation from God that someone is your wife (or someone is your husband) that person is yours for the rest of your life. But what man joins together anybody can pull apart.”

Bill repeated, “Bear me record of this before God: this is just to my group only. Some of you men and women married a second time because of misinterpreted theology. If God gave Moses and Paul special permission concerning marriage and divorce, should not God permit me to do the same thing?⁴⁷³ I say this by the vindication of His cloud upon the mountain and His message that has brought me this far. You men, who have made that mistake, go on the way you are and live in peace with your wives, but don’t you dare try to do it again. It wasn’t so in the beginning (a man having more than one living wife) and it will not be at the end. But under this modern condition, if you are happy with her, then live with her and raise your children in the admonition of God; but God be merciful to you if you ever do that again! You teach your children to never do a thing like that. God

⁴⁷³ Matthew 19:7; 1 Corinthians 7:6, where Paul said (speaking on the subject of marriage) “But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.”

bore me witness on the mountain that I could say this—let them go on as they are and sin no more. It is a supernatural revelation because of the opening of the seven seals, so that this question would not be left dangling.”⁴⁷⁴

In his sermon, “Who Is This Melchisedec?” Bill tackled an age-old question. Genesis 14 tells how the city of Sodom was ransacked by the king of Elam (Persia). Lot and his wife and children were captured and carried away to the north. Abraham assembled a fighting force of 318 men who pursued the king of Elam and defeated him in battle. Thus Abraham rescued his nephew Lot from slavery. After the battle, a priest named Melchisedec came to Abraham, blessed him, and then ate bread and drank wine with him.⁴⁷⁵ In return, Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec, giving Him a tenth of all he had. This story would be mysterious enough just from the Genesis account, but in Hebrews 7 Paul writes that Melchisedec is the King

⁴⁷⁴ If you have a question concerning marriage and divorce, don’t base any life-changing decisions on my synopsis of this sermon. Prayerfully consult the full text of William Branham’s sermon “Marriage and Divorce,” along with his sermon “Choosing of a Bride,” preached on April 29, 1965. (O.A.J.)

⁴⁷⁵ This is a type of the great wedding supper where, after the battle is over, Jesus eats bread and drinks wine with his bride. Mark 14:22-25

of peace and righteousness, and He didn't have a father or mother, neither beginning nor ending of days. Who is this mysterious person? Bill explained that Melchisedec had to be God Himself, because only God had no beginning. Melchisedec was God's *theophany* appearing to Abraham in order to pre-figure Jesus Christ. It was not Jesus like we see Him in the New Testament, because Jesus had a Father and a mother, and this man had neither. Jesus had a beginning; this man didn't. Jesus gave His life; this man couldn't, because He was life. Yet there is a close connection.

To explain that connection, Bill went back to the beginning of the universe when God lived alone with His thoughts. God is a spirit. After planning the universe, Spirit-God spoke. His words became the *logos*, or "the Word of God." A word is a thought that is openly expressed. Spirit-God has no form that we could recognize. Initially, His thoughts had no form that we could see. But as soon as He used words to express His thoughts, then in that sense He had a form that could be recognized, although at first there was

nothing around to see it. The *logos* that came out from Spirit-God was His *theophany*, or "Word-body." God's *theophany* was not a physical body; rather, it was a supernatural body. But now that His thoughts were expressed, His *theophany* could *become* a physical body. That is what happened in the days of Abraham. Bill explained that Melchisedec was "God the Word" appearing in flesh to Abraham two thousand years before He became "God incarnate" in Jesus Christ. Thus Abraham saw the *theophany* of Christ in a pre-incarnate form. Later, when God became incarnate and walked among men, Jesus said to the Jews, "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad.*" Then said the Jews unto Him, "*Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?*" Jesus said unto them, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*"⁴⁷⁶

The book of Hebrews explains how the Levitical priesthood (which God started in the days of Moses) came to an end when Jesus was sacrificed for the sins of mankind. From that day forward God has

⁴⁷⁶ John 8:56-58

ministered to His people through the priesthood of Melchisedec—Jesus Christ being *the* high priest par excellence.⁴⁷⁷

All this might have sounded abstract and overly technical until Bill explained that every born-again Christian also has a *theophany*. They have to have one, because they were in God's thoughts from the beginning. That makes them, in essence, attributes of God. When Jesus Christ was born on earth, He had His *theophany* with Him. That is why He was a perfect man, because He never strayed from His Father's Word. He could not stray because He and the Word of God were one and the same. The rest of God's children were born without their *theophanies* so that they could be tested with trials and could overcome the sin of unbelief through their faith in Jesus Christ. When a man (or a woman) finally recognizes that the Word of God is the true food which feeds his hungry soul, he has just heard from his *theophany*. Now he knows he has a Word-body waiting for him beyond this life. This is the meaning of 2 Corinthians 5:1,

which says: "*For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*" During the Millennium and forever thereafter, God's children will live with their physical bodies and their *theophanies* connected. Bill referred to this future state of being as a person living in a "glorified body."

IN APRIL OF 1965 William Branham saw a vision that both thrilled and frightened him. One day the spirit of God lifted him from his home and set him on a raised platform, like a reviewing stand on a military parade ground. He was looking west into the setting sun. The reviewing stand was perched on top of a hill—a hill so large and rounded that he couldn't see anything except sky beyond its brink. The angel of the Lord stood behind his right shoulder. Bill couldn't turn his head to see the angel, but he knew he was there because the angel announced: "*There is the Bride.*"

⁴⁷⁷ Hebrews 4:17 through 10:22

The air resounded with the steady beat of a marching song which sounded something like that lively church hymn: “Onward Christian soldiers marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before.” Coming from Bill’s right, a line of young women marched into view, parading in front of the reviewing stand. These women looked so beautiful and pure—perfect examples of how Christian women ought to present themselves. All of them had long hair and all of them wore either skirts or long dresses. Beyond these similarities, each one was unique. They were dressed in the traditional clothing of their homelands, showing that Jesus Christ had selected His Bride from all over the world. Bill felt happy, believing that his evangelistic work had helped to bring this beautiful Bride to Christ.

After these women passed the reviewing stand, they circled behind him. When the last one had marched out of his sight, the angel said, “*Now the modern church will pass by for review.*”

The music changed. Gone was the stirring anthem of Christian commitment, replaced by some kind of

boogie-woogie or rock-and-roll style of music that grated on Bill’s nerves.

The angel said, “*First the church from Asia will pass by for review.*”

Bill gasped in horror when he saw the modern church of Asia, and wondered how she could profess to be the Bride of Christ. Her hair was cut short and her face was painted with lipstick and eye shadow. She was dressed indecently and she danced past the reviewing stand, twisting provocatively to that awful music. Other ethnic women followed her example, dancing past the reviewing stand, representing the modern churches from India, Africa, Europe and other parts of the world. The angel announced the nationality of each church as she passed. It seemed like each woman looked worse than the one who came before her. All of them had short hair and painted faces, and they were all dressed indecently. They all swayed to music that seemed to throb like a migraine headache. Bill felt sick with disgust.

The angel announced, “*Now the church from America will pass by for review.*”

When Bill saw the woman who represented the modern churches in America, he nearly fainted. She was almost naked. In front of her waist she held something that looked like a piece of elephant's hide. Twisting and shaking to the music, she laughed as she cavorted past the reviewing stand.

Bill's spirit sank in despair. Miss Christianity of America was one of the most obscene-looking women he had ever seen. He thought, "As much as I have preached, and as hard as I have tried to persuade people to live for Christ, and this is the best I have to offer Him?" Then he prayed, "Oh God, I'm a condemned man. I might as well quit right now. There is no need of me trying any more. I've failed You."

The grating music diminished as the line of modern churches danced straight ahead toward the brink of the hill. The music seemed to be following them, like a marching band in a parade might follow a squad of majorettes twirling batons. Just like in a parade, another band seemed to be approaching the reviewing stand from Bill's right. As this new music grew louder, he realized it was the same song he had heard at first,

with a tune like: "Onward Christian soldiers marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before." It sounded so soothing to his ears. A tiny flame of hope flickered in his heart. He strained to see who was coming, but he was not allowed to turn his head. Soon another line of women marched into view. With tremendous relief he saw it was the same group of women he had seen at the first, each one dressed decently in her national costume. When they passed the reviewing stand, these godly women began to rise into the air, each step taking them higher, like they were climbing an invisible stairway up to the clouds. At the same time, the indecent women danced over the brink of the hill, one by one disappearing below the horizon.

The godly women marched in unison, as though they were listening to the voice of an unseen drill master. Bill thought, "I haven't failed Him after all. My efforts have not been in vain. There will be a Bride for Christ in the end-time."

Then he saw two of these godly women look over at the modern churches. It seemed to break their concentration and they got out of step with the others.

“Don’t do that, sisters!” Bill shouted. “Don’t get out of step! Stay in line!”

The vision left him.

DEMOS SHAKARIAN believed that God can work through people to perform miracles and to instruct through prophecy. His grandfather left Armenia (Turkey) in 1855 when a young Christian prophesied that an unspeakable tragedy was coming; and so the family missed the Great Calamity of 1915, when the Ottoman Empire systematically killed 1.5 million Armenians. The Shakarian family settled in California and started a dairy, which grew into a successful business. They also became Pentecostal Christians in the aftermath of the 1906 Azusa Street revival.

Demos Shakarian became involved with the Branham Campaigns back in the 1940s when Bill first

visited California. Over the years, Demos had helped sponsor several of Bill’s faith-healing campaigns and had seen God perform hundreds of miracles during those meetings. Sometimes Demos had worked as an usher, collecting prayer-cards from people in the prayer-lines as they left the main floor to walk up on the platform where Bill would discern and then pray for them. Demos always checked what these people wrote on their prayer-cards with the diagnosis Bill gave them through his supernatural gift. Demos never saw a mistake in that discernment, not even in the slightest detail. When Demos’ mother was dying, he asked Bill to come to the hospital and pray for her. When Bill did, Mrs. Shakarian rose from her deathbed and lived in good health for several more years.

In 1963 Demos Shakarian’s sister, Florence, was diagnosed with cancer. Although she was only 39, the cancer had advanced to a stage where her doctors couldn’t stop it. Naturally, Demos wanted Bill to pray for God to perform a miracle in his sister’s life.

As Bill began his prayer, God showed him a vision of Florence running from something that was trying to

kill her. She jumped into a bed and screamed for Bill's help. In the vision, he ran towards her, but she died before he could reach her side. A clock next to the bed showed him the time. Sadly, Bill told Demos that his sister would not live to see the coming of the Lord, but she would die some morning between 2 and 3 o'clock.

On Thursday evening, April 29, 1965, Bill spoke to the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, California. Before his sermon, Florence Shakarian (now 42) sang a beautiful solo that touched every heart in the room. The song was all the more poignant because most of the audience knew about her battle with cancer. Suddenly a Pentecostal man spoke in an unknown tongue; and then another Pentecostal man interpreted it, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Oh daughter of Zion, thou shalt not fear, thou shalt not worry, for thou shalt live to see the coming of the Lord'."

A murmur of approval rippled through the room. But Billy Paul Branham was troubled by this prophecy because he remembered that his father had said Florence would not live to see the coming of the Lord.

Although the banquet room was packed full of people, Bill was mindful of a larger audience. The twin reels of a tape recorder were turning, so he knew his sermon, "Choosing of a Bride," would go far beyond the four walls of this room. He took his text from Genesis 24, where Abraham was searching for a bride for his son, Isaac. Abraham was not impressed with the pretty women in the godless tribes of Canaan where he was living. He hoped to find a suitable bride in his homeland among his relatives. Since Abraham was too old to travel, he appointed his eldest servant, Eliezer, to accomplish this task. When Eliezer arrived at a well on the outskirts of Nahor, he prayed, "*O LORD God of my master Abraham...let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, 'Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink'; and she shall say, 'Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also': let the same be she that Thou has appointed for Thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that Thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.*" It happened just the way he prayed it would. Rebekah accepted the invitation Eliezer delivered. The very camels that she

watered carried Rebekah to her future husband, Isaac. This love story is a beautiful type of Christ and His Bride. (The same Holy Spirit that the believers water will carry them to their heavenly Bridegroom.)

Of the many choices we make in life, few choices affect us more deeply than our choice of a marriage partner. A good wife is the best thing God can give a man outside of salvation; but a bad one, as Solomon said, is rottenness in his bones.⁴⁷⁸ A good wife is one who fits her husband well, who complements his character and helps him fulfill his purpose. A man should pray before he chooses. He should not base his decision on a woman's outward beauty; he should look for the inward beauty of a Christian character. Outward beauty can be deceiving. (Remember, Lucifer was so beautiful, he convinced a third of the angels to follow him.) Inward beauty endures forever. If a man meets a woman who is born again, and the two of them fall in love, and they both pray about it, and they feel it is God's will, then they should get married. The character of the woman a man chooses to marry

reflects his own character and his ambitions. After all, she is going to help him make a future home.

These natural principles have important spiritual applications. When a man chooses a church for his family to attend, he should not look for a beautiful building, a fancy choir, or how many group activities the church sponsors. He should look for a church that preaches the full gospel, a church that makes the Bible its final authority.

Just as the man was not created for the woman, but the woman was created for the man; so Christ was not made for the church, but the church was made for Christ.⁴⁷⁹ Who will Jesus Christ choose for His Bride in this day? He will choose men and women who are filled with the Holy Spirit and who respect His Word.

Bill said, "Jesus did only what pleased God—that is, He honored and manifested God's Word. His Bride will have to be of the same character. She could not be chosen from inside of a denomination. Every denomination has a board of directors somewhere who tell their people what they can and can't do—and many times it is a million miles off the true Word. God

⁴⁷⁸ Proverbs 12:4; also see Proverbs 18:22; 19:13; 21:19; 27:15, 31:10 and 30.

⁴⁷⁹ 1 Corinthians 11:9; Ephesians 5:21-32

never intended to lead His church through popes, cardinals, bishops, priests or presbyters. He sent the Holy Ghost to lead His church. Jesus said, ‘When the Comforter (the Holy Ghost) is come, He will reveal what I have told you and lead you into all truth.’⁴⁸⁰ The modern church hates that plan, so how could she be Christ’s Bride? When Christians today choose to belong to a denomination, it reflects their poor understanding of the Word of God. I don’t mean to hurt your feelings, but I want it to go deep enough until you will look at it.”

Bill told them about the vision he saw of the Bride of Christ and the modern church on parade. As he neared the end of his sermon, he felt a strange impulse to speak freely, until he scarcely knew what he was saying. “Men, look at the creeds you serve. Is your church exactly with the Word of God? Women, look in the mirror—not in the mirror of your church, but in the mirror of God’s Word—and see if you qualify to be the spiritual Bride of Jesus Christ. Is your life patterned exactly like God’s marriage certificate (the

Bible) says it has to be? Ministers, ask yourselves the same thing. Do you soften what you preach to save somebody’s feelings, so they won’t put you out of the church? Church member, if your church isn’t measuring up to the qualifications of God’s Word, get out of it and get into Christ. That is a solemn warning. You don’t know what time this city is going to sink to the bottom of this ocean.”

Bill’s exhortation changed into a prophecy. “Los Angeles, thou city who claims to be the city of the angels, who has exalted yourself into heaven and sent your filthy fashions and dirty movies around the world—regardless of your fine churches, remember, one day you’ll lie at the bottom of this sea. The ground under you is like a honeycomb. The wrath of God is belching beneath you. I don’t know how much longer He’ll wait before this sandbar will sink and that ocean out yonder will slide inland all the way back to the Salton Sea.⁴⁸¹ It will be worse than the last day of Pompeii.⁴⁸² Repent, Los Angeles! Repent, the rest of you, and turn to God!

⁴⁸¹ The Salton Sea is a large lake in the Imperial Valley of California, about 150 miles southeast of Los Angeles. The Salton Sea lies below sea level.

⁴⁸² Pompeii was a city in Italy that was destroyed in A.D. 79 when Mount Vesuvius erupted, burying the city and its inhabitants under volcanic ash.

⁴⁸⁰ John 14:16-26; 16:12-15

The hour of His wrath is upon the earth. Flee while there is time to flee, and come into Christ!”

Amid much weeping and repenting by the audience, Bill prayed his closing prayer. Then he added, “My brothers and sisters, I don’t know what more to say. If you believe me to be His prophet—this is the first time in public I’ve ever said that, but I feel a strange warning of some sort. I’m not prone to this. You know I’m not. I usually don’t act like this. I hesitated to speak that message, but now it’s been said; and it will stand at the Day of Judgment as a witness that I’ve told the truth. That is ‘Thus saith the Lord God.’

“Oh Pentecostals, run for your lives. Flee to the horns of the altar and cry out before it is too late; for the hour will come when you can cry and it will do you no good. Remember, Esau sought to find the place of his birthright and couldn’t find it.⁴⁸³ I commit you, oh members of the Full Gospel Businessmen, whom I love with all my heart, I commit you to Jesus Christ tonight. Flee to Him. Never let the devil cool you off from this Word. Stay right with it until you’re filled

with the Holy Ghost insomuch that you men and women will straighten up and live godly lives. If you say you’ve got the Holy Ghost and won’t cope with the Word, it’s another spirit in you. God’s spirit is on His Word. Christ’s Bride must be the anointed Word.”

After the meeting ended, Bill felt numb and somewhat dazed, the way he used to feel when visions sapped his energy during a prayer-line. But tonight he had seen no visions. Something else had moved his tongue. Billy Paul and Earl Williams (who was Carl Williams’ son) each took one of Bill’s arms and guided him out of the building. Bill walked with his head tilted back and his eyes half shut. He didn’t drag his feet, but neither did he seem fully conscious of his surroundings. As Bill came up to his car, his head rolled forward, his eyes focused on his son, and he said, “Paul, what did I tell those people? I didn’t come here to be mean to them.”

“You’re all right, Daddy,” Billy Paul answered. “You didn’t say anything mean to them.”

On their drive back to Tucson, Bill told his son that he could not remember what he had said during the

⁴⁸³ Hebrews 12:14-17

last part of his sermon. Billy Paul told him how he had prophesied that Los Angeles would someday sink beneath the ocean.

A stretch of silence followed, and then Bill asked his son if that was why he looked so glum. Billy Paul reminded his father about the person who interpreted that unknown tongue, prophesying that Florence Shakarian would live to see the coming of the Lord. Billy Paul hesitated, and then expressed his quandary. “Daddy, you said she would not live to see the coming of the Lord, but she would die some morning between 2 and 3 o’clock.”

“Son, all I can say is that the Lord has not shown me anything different from what I’ve already said.”⁴⁸⁴

Later that night Bill read Matthew 11:23, where Jesus prophesied: “*Thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.*” Consulting a Bible dictionary, he learned that an earthquake sent Sodom to the bottom of the

Dead Sea; and Capernaum was also destroyed by an earthquake.

EVER SINCE WILLIAM BRANHAM visited South Africa in 1951 he wanted to return and spend more time preaching to the indigenous natives. He liked the way they accepted his message with simple faith that produced tremendous results, not only in healings and miracles, but also in changed lives for Jesus Christ. He felt his work in Africa was not finished. For many years he didn’t have the financial backing to hold more faith-healing campaigns in Africa. Later he was promised financial support, but then he could not get a visa. He suspected interference from South Africa’s religious leaders, who wielded a lot of political power through their National Committee. In 1965 Bill again applied for visas to South Africa and Mozambique. Both visas were approved; however they were restricted visas which would permit him to hunt, but would not allow him to hold any religious meetings. Apparently South Africa

⁴⁸⁴ Florence Shakarian died on September 10, 1965 at 2:45 a.m.

was simmering with political unrest. Government officials worried that any large gathering of natives (remember, tens of thousands of natives attended his Durban meeting in 1951) might turn into a riot. Although disappointed with this restriction, he nevertheless bought airplane tickets for himself and for Billy Paul.

They landed in Johannesburg, South Africa, on May 26, 1965. Sidney Jackson met them at the airport. A few days later the three of them flew to Beira, on the coast of Mozambique, where they hired a guide and outfitted for a three-week-long safari. They rented a Land Rover, which is a boxy 4-wheel drive truck manufactured in England. Loading the Land Rover with supplies, they drove 150 miles west into some very wild country. African savanna is composed of subtropical grasslands dotted with thorny trees that have small leaves. Large herds of grazing animals migrate across the savanna, like elephants, giraffes, zebras, wildebeests, ibex, and others. Many predators prey on these herds, such as lions, leopards, cheetahs, hyenas, jackals, eagles, falcons, and vultures.

For three weeks Bill and his companions lived in the bush country, hunting by day, cooking over a fire in the evening and sleeping in tents at night. Every few days they moved their camp to a new location. One afternoon about 5 o'clock, Bill saw a vision of two dark-skinned natives carrying a third native on a stretcher. The vision made it clear that the third man was sick with a contagious disease.

When the vision ended, Bill walked over to Sidney Jackson's tent and said, "Brother Jackson, in a little while they are going to bring a man in here who is suffering from smallpox. As I understand it, the law in Mozambique says that out here in the savanna, if a sick person asks us for help, we are obligated to drive him to the nearest doctor or hospital."

"That's right, Brother Branham. In our case, the nearest hospital is at Beira, 150 miles away. We would just send our guide, so we would be here for two days without a vehicle."

"Brother Jackson, if you were asked to pray for this man, would you put your hands on him, knowing that smallpox is contagious?"

Jackson smiled. "I would do what a certain Irishman said he would do—shoot first and argue later," referring to something Bill had said to him on one of their hunts.

"Come with me," Bill said. He turned and walked into the tall grass that surrounded their camp. Jackson followed him. The temperature was a stifling 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Bill was not following a trail; he just pushed his way through the elephant grass, which was about 7 feet tall. Naturally there was no way for him to see what lay ahead. About 200 yards from camp, he stopped and said, "Stand still."

After a minute of listening, they heard a rustling noise coming toward them. Three men pushed through the tall grass, two of them carrying a third man on a stretcher made from strips of bark woven together. The man in the lead looked puzzled when he saw two white men standing quietly in the thick, tall grass. Sidney Jackson spoke to them in their native language, asking them to set the stretcher down so he and the American evangelist could pray for their friend. The sick man groaned with pain as these men lowered the

stretcher. Bill and Sidney knelt and laid their hands on the sick man, feeling the heat from his fever even on such a hot day. After saying a short prayer, Bill stood and walked back to camp. The other men followed him. When the three natives reached the clearing, they spoke to the guide, who immediately loaded the sick man in the back of the Land Rover and drove off. Everyone else ate supper and retired to their tents for the night.

In the morning Sidney Jackson was surprised to see that the Land Rover was already back. He roused the guide and said, "You made that trip to Beira very quickly."

The driver answered, "No, I didn't go. Just a few miles out of camp, that man on the stretcher thumped on the top of the cab and said, 'Let me off here. My house is nearby.' So I let him off and I came back."

"Wasn't he sick?"

"No. He told me he felt as good as rain."

One day Billy Paul shot a leopard that had been killing cattle near a village. The local natives were grateful and held a feast to celebrate their deliverance

from the leopard. Not only did the hunters attend this feast, Bill donated meat from a zebra he had shot.

A few days later the hunters discovered the trail of a Cape buffalo. Cape buffalos are large animals having massive, downward curving horns and nasty tempers. Sidney urged Bill to hunt the buffalo with his elephant gun, which was a .416 Rigby Nitro; but Bill wanted to use his .300 Weatherby, which had been given to him by some friends to replace the gun that had blown up in his face. They tracked this buffalo for several hours until they found it grazing in short grass. As the hunters crept forward, the buffalo smelled their scent. Immediately it lowered its head and charged. Bill brought it down with one shot (much to Sidney Jackson's relief, because there would not have been enough time for a second shot).

Bill wanted to shoot a lion, but two weeks went by without seeing one. He tried setting a trap. First he shot a zebra. Tying the dead zebra behind the Land Rover, he drug it in a wide circle around a tree, then left the zebra carcass under the tree, hoping a lion would smell zebra scent and follow it to the tree. After

a few unproductive days of waiting, he tried a different approach. He used his four native trackers to beat the brush, making as much noise as possible in a wide arc, trying to frighten a lion into running toward the hunters. This method didn't work either.

Despite this disappointment, it was a successful safari. Bill and Billy Paul collected 33 trophies between them. Back in Beira, Bill arranged to have the animal heads stuffed and mounted, and the skins cured. Later they would be shipped back to Tucson, Arizona, where he planned to display them in his new den room.

Before the hunters left Beira, a native ran up to Sidney Jackson and said that someone wanted to see "the master." Sidney followed this native to a room where a young man waited. It was the man who Bill and Sidney had prayed for while he lay fever-ridden on that woven bark stretcher in the elephant grass. Incredibly, this man had walked 150 miles, just so he could thank "the master" for praying for him. Sidney Jackson led the man to William Branham, and together

the two hunters told him about the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

A FEW DAYS after he returned from Africa, William Branham dreamed he was a young man again, working at his original job at Public Service Indiana. In the dream he was walking his old route, collecting money from customers for their electricity bills. It was a hot day and sweat dripped from his temples as he walked by a river. Setting the customers' money and their receipts on the ground, he changed into swimming trunks and jumped into the cool water. He thought, "This isn't right. I shouldn't be swimming on company time." Getting out of the river, he changed back into his service uniform. Suddenly a gust of wind blew his receipts away, leaving him with a pile of coins. He thought, "Now what do I do? I don't remember who paid what amount on their bills. The only thing I can think of is to leave this money with the cashier, and when these customers get a notice that they haven't paid their bills, they will bring in the

other half of their receipts. That sure is a lot of bother, all because I wasn't paying attention."

When Bill awoke, he turned over in bed. Meda batted her eyes, and then opened them wide and yawned. "Did you sleep well?" she asked.

"No. I dreamed that I was back at the public service company."

"Again?" she asked with a hint of surprise.

During the past year Bill had dreamed several times that he was back working for the public utility company in Jeffersonville, and in each dream something bad happened. The frequency of these dreams bothered him. Was the Lord trying to tell him something? Earlier in the year, he asked God to give him a vision that would show him if he had done something wrong, so he could make it right. So far, the Lord had not given him a vision to explain these dreams.

They prayed together as was their morning custom. Then Meda went next door to wake their children. (Remember, they were living in a duplex.)

“Lord,” Bill prayed, “What have I done that my subconscious mind won’t let me get away from my old job? I must be an awful guy.”

After he bathed and dressed, a thought came to him: “Maybe I’m neglecting the Lord’s work. Maybe that is what the Lord is trying to tell me through those dreams.”

Grabbing his Bible, he sat at his desk. It was a simple wooden desk just a little wider than its companion chair—about as big of a desk as this small apartment could accommodate. He said, “Lord, in the Old Testament, if Your children wondered about a dream, You spoke to them through the Urim and Thummim—through that supernatural light sparkling in those twelve precious stones on the breastplate of Your high priest.⁴⁸⁵ But that priesthood has changed, and now the Bible is Your Urim and Thummim. Lord, since You haven’t given me a vision to explain those dreams, I’m asking You to show me something in Your Bible that will explain them. Surely there is some

character and situation in here that will pertain to me. If somebody in here did something wrong, and it matches something I have done that displeases You, then let me turn to that place so I will know, and can make it right. If someone in here had a task to do, and You want me to do that same thing, then show me.”

Bill held the Bible upright in front of him, its spine on the desk, the covers pressed closed between the flats of his hands. Shutting his eyes, he withdrew his hands so that his Bible fell open randomly. Pressing his index finger down on a page, he opened his eyes and read the verse his finger was touching. It was Genesis 24:7, “*The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father’s house...*”

“Hmmm,” He thought. “Who is speaking to whom?” He glanced back at the chapter heading to get the context. Abraham was trying to find a wife for his son, Isaac. Here in verse 7 Abraham was sending his steward, Eliezer, to search in the region of Mesopotamia. Abraham said, “*The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father’s house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me,*

⁴⁸⁵ Uwriym (Urim)=lights; Tummiym (Thummim)=used with the Urim, for the will of God. Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8; Numbers 27:21; Deuteronomy 33:8; 1 Samuel 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65.

and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; He shall send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.”

He shall send His angel before thee? How striking. A chill ran along Bill’s spine. He thought about the angel of the Lord who had been his guide and companion since the day his ministry began. Bill realized he had a commission like Eliezer; only his duty was to find a wife for someone far greater than Isaac. He was trying to find a Bride for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 94

The Dove and the Eagle

1965

WILLIAM BRANHAM took his family to Jeffersonville for July and August of 1965. He wanted to hold special meetings for a week and preach on the seven last vials mentioned in Revelation 15 and 16. Unfortunately, he was not able to rent the school auditorium during the summer. He knew that Branham Tabernacle could not hold all the people who would come if he announced special meetings, so he held off. He asked the board of directors at the Tabernacle to look for a large tent they could buy. With a circus-style tent, Bill figured he could rent a farmer’s field, set up the tent and hold special meetings for as long as his subject required. Besides, he still thought there might be a literal interpretation to his December 1955 vision of a tent (or cathedral) that had a little house inside where miracles occurred.

Meanwhile, Bill was content to preach at Branham Tabernacle every Sunday for the next two months. On Sunday morning, July 18, 1965, he spoke on “Trying to Do God a Service without It Being the Will of God.” He took his text from 1 Chronicles 13, where King David brought the Ark of the Covenant back to

Jerusalem. David placed the ark in an ox cart, instead of having Levites carry it as God had prescribed. When the ox stumbled, Uzza (who was not a Levite) put his hand on the ark to steady it. Instantly God killed the man for his presumption. Uzza sincerely wanted to do God a service, but God didn't receive his gesture because it was contrary to God's commandments. Bill brought this story into today's religious arena by quoting Mark 7:7, where Jesus said, *"In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men."*

That evening his subject was "Spiritual Food in Due Season." His text was 1 Kings 17. During a drought and resulting famine, Elijah hid from King Ahab by the brook Cherith, and God used ravens to bring him food. Bill said this was a type of the religious climate today. A great spiritual drought and famine has encompassed the world. He quoted Amos 8:11, *"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD."*

Bill used other Bible stories to show that God will always feed His children the proper diet at the proper time. Bill said, "Why is it that my message doesn't circulate amongst the denominations? It's not their food. It is not food to feed a lukewarm church. It's Bride food. It's spiritual food in season. It would make them so-called church people sick at their stomach. It's too rich for them. But for the children of the Kingdom it's bread, it's life, it's Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever."

On July 25, 1965, Bill preached "Anointed Ones at the End Time." First he read Matthew 24:15-28, where Jesus told His disciples about the last days, the great tribulation, and His second coming. Bill took his text from 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."* Notice how Jesus used the term "false Christs," instead of "false Jesuses." The word *Christ* means "the anointed one." Jesus made it plural so we would know there will be many false anointed ones at the end-time. Jesus connected

these false anointed ones with false prophets. A prophet hears from God and then teaches his revelation to the people. These false anointed ones are the false preachers who will teach false doctrines and deceive millions of people. Sometimes their doctrines will be close to the truth, yet wrong in a few key points. Remember how Satan deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden. God said if Eve ate of the fruit of a certain tree she would die. Satan said if she ate that fruit, she would NOT die, but she would become more like God because she would know the difference between good and evil. Satan told Eve some things that were true, but his lie was in that one word “NOT”, which changed everything. These false anointed ones at the end-time will twist the Word of God just enough so that it no longer means what God intended, and in so doing they will deceive everyone except the elect. Thankfully, it is not possible to deceive the elect (the Bride of Christ) because the Holy Spirit will guide these people into all truth.⁴⁸⁶

What exactly is anointing these false prophets? Surprisingly, they are anointed with the genuine Holy Spirit, yet they are false. How can this be? In Matthew 5:45, Jesus said, *“Your Father which is in heaven... maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”* He is not just referring to natural rain; He is also referring to the spiritual rain of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul said the same thing in Hebrews 6:4-8: *“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.”*

⁴⁸⁶ John 16:12-15

How can the genuine Holy Spirit anoint a false teacher? Again Bill used the illustration of an orange tree which has other citrus branches grafted into its trunk. A branch from a grapefruit tree will produce grapefruit; a lemon branch will produce lemons; a lime branch will produce limes. All of these branches are feeding off of the life in the orange tree's roots. But when the orange tree grows a new branch from its trunk, it will produce oranges. Likewise the Catholic denomination, the Methodist denomination, the Baptist denomination—all of the denominations are feeding off of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, the Catholics produce more Catholics, the Methodists produce more Methodists, etc. However, if (or rather, *when*) the parent tree puts forth a new branch, it will be just like the original branch in the book of Acts—it will produce a people who will get baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, receive the Holy Spirit, and follow the teachings of Peter and Paul; a people who will believe in the God who still performs miracles.

God first taught Bill this lesson when he visited a Pentecostal convention at Mishawaka, Indiana, in

1936. During the convention, he saw two men who spoke in unknown tongues and interpreted the tongues. After the meeting ended, Bill talked to these two men. God showed him through a vision that one man was a genuine Christian, and the other man was a hypocrite. How could both men apparently possess the same supernatural gifts? It troubled him until God showed him a vision that explained this paradox. First Bill saw the world turning on its axis. Then he saw a man dressed in white walking over the earth scattering wheat and other good seeds. Next Bill saw a man dressed in black sowing thistles and other bad seeds. All the seeds grew together. When a drought came, they all got thirsty and prayed for rain. When the rain came and watered them, the thistles praised God right along with the wheat. God used Hebrews 6:4-8 to explain the vision—the same rain waters all the seeds together, but the nature of the seed is unchanged. In Matthew 7:15-20 Jesus said, "*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs*

of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit... Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” Their “fruits” are the doctrines they preach. Good doctrine lines up with the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Jesus continued, *“Not everyone that saith unto Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?’ And then will I profess unto them, ‘I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity’.”* In John 15:5-6 Jesus said, *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abides not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”*

Bill said, “You heard me preach on the true and false vines many years ago. I showed how Cain and Abel

met at the altar, both of them religious, both of them anointed, both of them desiring life and worshipping the same God. Cain was rejected while Abel was received. It was revealed to Abel that he must offer a lamb’s blood on the altar. Hebrews 11:4 said: *“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than that of Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts...”* You might think it wasn’t a revelation. What is faith? Faith is something that is revealed to you; something that is not yet, but you believe it will be. Faith is a revelation of the will of God. Jesus said He would build His church on the rock of the revelation of who He is.⁴⁸⁷ Yet today, many churches don’t even believe in spiritual revelation. They believe in the dogmatic teaching of some system.”

“Not long ago I was talking to a Christian scholar. He said, ‘Mr. Branham, we refuse all revelations.’ I said, ‘Then you have to refuse Jesus Christ, for He is the revelation of God—God revealed in human flesh.’ Unless you see it, you’re lost. Jesus said, *‘If ye believe*

⁴⁸⁷ Matthew 16:15-18

*not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.*⁴⁸⁸ He is the revelation of God; the spirit of God revealed in human form. If you can't believe that, you're lost. If you put Him as a third person, a second person, or any other person besides God, you're lost. Jesus said, 'Unless you believe that I'm He, you will die in your sins.' It is a revelation."

Bill began August by preaching "God of This Evil Age," and ended August by preaching "Satan's Eden." In "God of This Evil Age," He took his text from 2 Corinthians 4:3 and 4: *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."* The phrase "god of this world" refers to Satan, who has held control over this world since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. In his sermon "Satan's Eden," Bill showed how Satan's purpose from the beginning was to establish his kingdom on the earth,

⁴⁸⁸ John 8:24. Compare this Scripture with Deuteronomy 32:39-43, John 8:23 and 13:19; Also with Deuteronomy 18:15-19 and Acts 3:22-26; also with Exodus 3:13-15 and John 8:58.

so that he would be worshiped as god.⁴⁸⁹ Century after century, millennium after millennium, he worked toward that objective, using every form of deceit imaginable. Today, he has finally reached his goal. Satan has finally reproduced his version of the Garden of Eden. This world, with its highly organized religions (including organized Christianity), and its emphasis on science and technology as the answer to every problem—this world has become a veritable "Satan's Eden."

Between these two sermons Bill preached "Christ Is Revealed In His Own Word." In this sermon he took his text from 2 Timothy 2:15, where Paul said, *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* Bill said, "In using God's Word, there are three things you must not do. You must not misinterpret, misplace, or dislocate the Word of God." He gave examples, saying that if anybody misinterpreted Jesus Christ as being anyone other than God Himself—that is, if you make Him the second

⁴⁸⁹ 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

person in the Godhead, as if He is merely one god out of three—this would upset every word in the entire Bible. It would break the first commandment, ‘*Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*’⁴⁹⁰ It would make the whole Christian religion into a bunch of pagans worshipping three different gods. So, you must not misinterpret the position of Jesus in the Bible. He was more than just God’s spirit inside of a man. He was different from us because His genes and chromosomes were created by God in Mary’s womb; but at the same time He was like us in that He was a real man who was born and grew in the regular way. That makes Him both God and man.⁴⁹¹ He was the God-man. We

⁴⁹⁰ Exodus 20:3

⁴⁹¹ In another sermon William Branham said, “Jesus was not God, but he was God. He was a man, yet he was God. He could cry, and yet he could raise the dead. He could cry for a man being dead and raise him back up again. He was Jehovah-jireh, Jehovah-rapha, Jehovah Manasses; he was Jehovah, all completely. He was Jehovah, and yet he was a man. He owned the earth, and made the earth, and had not a place to lay his head. He said, ‘The birds that I made have nests, and I haven’t got a place to lay my head. The foxes that I created, have holes in the ground, and I haven’t even got one myself to be buried in.’ That’s right. He had to borrow somebody’s grave to be buried in. He created a womb that was in a woman. He had no womb to be born in; he had to borrow a womb. He created the earth and had not a place to be buried in; he had to borrow a hole in the ground to be buried in. He had to borrow a place from Joseph of Arimathaea, yet he was God. He proved that he was God. Now, you understand? We are Messiahettes, but we are not that Jesus. He is our Father; we’re just anointed with his spirit, and that is the reason his life... is separated on the day of Pentecost. When that Pillar of Fire came down, it separated like tongues and set upon each of them, God dividing himself among his people, because the church and Christ is one, just as the

must not misinterpret Jesus Christ as being anyone other than the Word of God translated into flesh, for Jesus Himself is the interpretation of the Bible. He is manifesting Himself in His body, the church. Through the different church ages He revealed Himself—first through His feet, in the foundational work of the apostles, and now we’re at the age of the eyes, the prophetic age. Next the brain will come, Jesus Christ Himself. He is the intelligence, and He must govern the body all the way through. Then the complete body of Christ is revealed in the form of the Bride that was taken out of His side, like Eve was taken from Adam’s side at the beginning.

An example of misplacing the Word is to read Scriptures that talk about healing and miracles, and to say they were only for the bygone days of Jesus and the twelve apostles. God’s power should not be relegated to ancient history. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever.

You will dislocate the Word if you don’t recognize the Scriptures that speak directly about the church age

husband and wife is one.” (“QUESTIONS.AND.ANSWERS,” 64-0830M, 1085-110 to 1085-111).

in which you live. In the second and third chapters of Revelation, God said, “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.*” Jesus Christ dictated those seven letters to those seven churches, and each letter was different because each church age was different. God has a specific message for each age. His Bride in each age will hear it—and thus, she will rightly divide the Word of truth. That is how she overcomes, despite everything Satan throws against her. Those who overcome in the seventh church age (Laodicea) will recognize Malachi 4:5-6, Luke 17:30, Revelation 10:1-7, and other Scriptures that apply specifically to their day.

As the summer of 1965 ended, William Branham took his family back to Tucson so his children could return to school. Ten-year-old Joseph was entering the fifth grade and fourteen-year-old Sarah was entering the ninth grade. Rebekah, now 19, had graduated from high school but was still living with her parents in the duplex apartments on Park Avenue. At 46, Meda was busy mothering her school-age children. Bill, who was now 56 years old, was not sure what God wanted him

to do next. His future was open to a number of possibilities. He only had one large campaign scheduled during the rest of the year—four days in Shreveport, Louisiana, at the end of November. Besides that, he had a couple of single meetings scheduled—one on Saturday morning, September 11, at a Full Gospel Business Men’s breakfast in Phoenix; and another meeting the following week at the Grantway Assembly of God church in Tucson.

He was happy that Reverend Mack had invited him to speak at the Grantway Assembly of God, but at the same time this engagement underscored one of his long-running concerns. He was good friends with most of the Pentecostal ministers in Tucson, yet he had lived there for two years, and this was the first time one of them had asked him to speak in his church. Bill understood the position of these pastors. It was a matter of church politics. Since their denominational leaders disagreed with Bill Branham’s doctrines, the local pastors couldn’t invite him to speak without risking their good standings in their organizations. Bill did not hold that against them. He loved them just the

same. Nevertheless, he did not feel comfortable taking his children to any of these churches on a regular basis.

Beyond this, Bill was concerned about the spiritual welfare of several hundred people who had moved to Tucson so they could be near his ministry; and yet, there was no church in the city where they could hear him teach. Since God had not told him to return to his original role as a pastor, Bill did not feel led to start another church. He felt he must stay free to travel as an evangelist. So, for a long time he had been praying for God to inspire someone else to establish a church in Tucson where his message would be taught. Over the last few months Bill had asked several qualified men to consider moving to Tucson and starting such a church, but so far no one had said they felt led to do this.

On Friday, September 10, 1965, Bill drove to Phoenix. The next morning, in the banquet room of the Ramada Inn, he spoke to the businessmen and their families on “God’s Power to Transform.” After the meeting ended, Bill talked with Pearry Green, a young

Christian businessman from Beaumont, Texas. Pearry Green was 32 years old, only a year older than Billy Paul. Pearry and Billy Paul had met and become friends when they both attended Bible School in 1952. Pearry had sponsored Bill’s faith-healing campaign in Beaumont in 1964. Now Pearry told Bill that he would sell his business in Texas so he could move to Tucson and open a place of worship there for those people who followed Bill’s message in that city. Bill urged him to do it quickly.

Pearry Green’s commitment to open a church in Tucson relieved one of Bill’s concerns. He was still concerned about the book he was preparing on the seven church ages. At home in Tucson he reviewed the manuscript once more before it went to the printer. He wanted to add some material. In January of 1964, Pope Paul VI visited Jerusalem, the first pope ever to do so. That same night the moon underwent a total eclipse. Bill read about these two events in the newspaper, which also carried a series of photographs showing the lunar eclipse. He noticed that the shading of the moon in these six photographs matched the shading in the

circles he drew on his blackboard at Branham Tabernacle when he illustrated the amount of light that was in each church age. That 1964 lunar eclipse looked like a sign in the heavens confirming his message on the seven church ages. He wanted to put those 6 pictures from the newspaper into his book, and explain their significance.

Bill's other big concern was about his health. Earlier in the year his stomach had turned sour again. It had given him fits of nausea and indigestion all through the summer. Now it was fall and his stomach seemed to be getting worse. He was losing weight and was having trouble sleeping. Sometimes the pain hit him so sharply and so high in his chest that it mimicked a heart attack. His doctor tested his heart using an electro-cardiogram. The test showed a heart beating strong enough to carry him to the century mark. Mystified, the doctor referred him to a stomach specialist.

Bill explained to the stomach specialist, a man named Dr. Van Ravensworth, how he had suffered with this stomach condition ever since he was a boy.

The first attack came when he was seven years old, and it bothered him for nearly a year. Then it left him and he felt fine until he was about 14. It hit him again when he was 23. His stomach bothered him for months until he became a Christian and Jesus healed him. He was symptom-free for about seven years, and then it struck him again. Each recurrence of this condition grew progressively worse. When it hit him again in 1948, it almost killed him. His stomach felt so bad that it forced him to leave his national ministry for six months. At that time he went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, hoping to find out what was wrong with him; but they couldn't help him. Thankfully, he recovered. The sixth time it hit him was when he was in India at the end of 1955, and it bothered him through much of 1956. It seemed to come upon him every seven years and would usually last about a year, give or take a few months. Then he went eight years without a severe attack and he assumed it was all over—until now, when it had started to bother him again.

Dr. Van Ravensworth suggested that Bill undergo a gastroduodenoscopy, a new procedure where he would be sedated and a tube called an endoscope would be pushed down his throat. Through this endoscope the doctor could actually look at the inside of his stomach and perhaps then he could tell what was wrong. Bill agreed to the procedure.

On Friday, September 17, 1965, Dr. Ravensworth used his endoscope to examine the lining of Bill's stomach. The anesthesiologist, who gave Bill a small dose of sodium pentothal, expected his patient to sleep ten minutes under sedation. Instead he slept 10 hours.

The next morning Bill had breakfast with Pearry Green in the cafeteria of the Ramada Inn where Pearry was staying. The older man and the younger man discussed what steps it would take to establish a church in Tucson. Then Bill told Pearry about many of the supernatural events that led up to, and followed the opening of the seven seals in the book of Revelation—the vision of the stake in his yard in Jeffersonville, the sword that appeared in his hand in Sabino Canyon, the

seven angels who met him near Sunset Peak, etc. They sat in the restaurant so long that they ordered lunch.

On Sunday evening Bill spoke at the Grantway Assembly of God church. His subject was “Thirst.” Using Psalms 42 as his text, he compared the body's thirst for water to the soul's thirst for God. Through a telephone connection, this sermon was broadcast live to 28 churches from Texas to New York.

Monday morning, September 20, 1965, he woke at 5 o'clock and immediately thought about his appointment in the afternoon with Dr. Ravensworth. Today he would learn the results of last Friday's gastroduodenoscopy. He looked across the small bedroom to the twin bed where Meda lay. Her eyelids still hid her eyes. Setting up in bed, Bill looked out the window at the Catalina Mountains. His eyes followed the contours of the skyline down into the mouth of Sabino Canyon. Suddenly the skyline disappeared. He was no longer in his bedroom, but was standing in the midst of a forest. In front of him stood a dead tree so old that all of its bark and most of its limbs were gone. Bill recognized this stump as the same hollow tree he

had seen in a vision right before he had received his test results at the Mayo Clinic in 1948. In that earlier vision he had tapped on this stump with a stick, causing an odd-looking squirrel to scramble out of a knot hole. The squirrel had jumped at him, landed in his mouth, and ran into his stomach where it tore at his insides with its sharp claws. When he cried out to the Lord for help, a voice said, “*Remember, it’s only six inches long.*” Over the years, whenever his stomach soured and his strength flagged, he thought of that vision and wondered what the Lord meant. Now, here he was, 17 years later, looking at that same hollow tree.

“I’m sure this is that squirrel’s den,” Bill thought. “I wonder if that odd little squirrel is still in there.” Picking up a stick, he tapped on the side of the tree. Out jumped the squirrel. It leaped straight at the startled man, but this time, instead of landing on Bill’s shoulder and jumping into his mouth, the squirrel bounced off his chest and fell to the ground, limp and lifeless. At the same moment, a voice said, “*Go to the Catalina Mountains.*” Just as suddenly as the vision

had appeared, it was gone. Bill was again sitting on his bed, looking out the window towards Sabino Canyon.

Excitement filled him, a hopeful excitement like the kind that comes when you hear the rumble of thunder in the desert and you think that a long-awaited rain might finally come. Several hours later he drove Sarah and Joe to school, and then continued on to Sabino Canyon. He drove into the park and followed the road next to the stream. In September the water just trickled from pool to pool between the giant boulders. The tall, green trees of the canyon bottom contrasted sharply with the sparse, pale-green vegetation that dotted the rocky slopes above. About two miles beyond the park entrance, he left his car in the parking lot and followed the trail up the eastern slope of the canyon. When he came to the “T” where the trail split, he took the path that led south, which would take him around to the mid-level hills where the King’s sword had appeared in his hand.

It was almost eleven o’clock. As he came to a cove in the canyon slope where the trail made a 90 degree turn, he suddenly felt the presence of the Lord.

Abruptly he stopped and took off his hat, thinking, “He’s here somewhere.” Bill took a few more steps, then stopped again and said, “Lord, I know You’re here. What is this all about?”

Looking around the rocky cove, he noticed a dead animal. On closer examination, he was amazed to see it was a squirrel, although a rather odd-looking squirrel to his way of thinking. This animal belonged to a species of squirrels native to Arizona and Mexico. It was smaller than the squirrels he hunted in Indiana and Kentucky, and it did not have the large, bushy tail characteristic of its northern cousins. In some ways it looked more like a weasel than the squirrels he was used to seeing. It was definitely the animal he had seen in his vision this morning. It had leaped from the rocks above and landed in the branches of a cactus plant known as a jumping cholla. Perhaps the squirrel had fled from a predator in such haste that it didn’t have time to look before it leaped. Whatever the reason, it had made a fatal mistake. The branches of the jumping cholla are protected by a thick covering of two-inch-long spines, like sewing needles pointing outward in

every direction. Some of these spines punctured the squirrels head, chest and stomach.

From somewhere among the rocks above him, a voice said, “*Your enemy is dead.*”

He nudged the corpse with his foot. Judging from the stiffness of the carcass, it must have died several days ago—perhaps around the time he went to the hospital to have his stomach examined. It was a wonder that crows hadn’t eaten the dead squirrel by now.

Bill continued along the trail, stopping when he reached the place where the King’s sword appeared in his hand. He stayed there for a while, enjoying the beauty of the canyon, thanking the Lord for His love and mercy. Then he hiked back along the trail to his car. He had an appointment to keep.

Later that afternoon Dr. Ravensworth said, “Mr. Branham, you have gastritis, which is inflammation of the stomach lining. That is why your stomach is so tender and why you feel nauseous and sometimes you vomit. The lining of your stomach should be soft and pliable, but yours has dried to the point where it is

more like leather. Unfortunately, there is nothing medical science can do for you. I'm sorry."

Discouragement threatened to strike him like a rattlesnake coiled near his feet. Bill kicked at it with his faith, bolstered by the vision he saw that morning and the dead squirrel he had seen in Sabino Canyon. He told his wife, "Honey, I don't know how, but I'm going to get over this stomach condition."

On Tuesday morning he again drove over to Sabino Canyon, parked his car at the trail head and hiked up the canyon. Where the trail spilt he again turned to his right, which took him south along the eastern slope of Sabino. As he walked, his mind struggled with the prognosis Dr. Ravensworth had given him. It sounded so final; yet just yesterday on this very same trail he had heard a supernatural voice say that his enemy was dead. Sometimes faith and the perception of facts can battle against each other, especially if faith and facts *seem* to be mutually exclusive. Bill knew by experience that faith was the greater power, but only if that faith was in line with the will of God. Bill didn't want to just assume he knew what God's will was in

this matter. He wanted to know for certain. So his question was—what enemy of his was dead?

He thought about his examination by doctors at the Mayo Clinic in 1948. They also told him that nothing would help his sour stomach. Back then he would have been discouraged if it had not been for his vision of that funny-looking squirrel; and for a peculiar dream his mother had dreamed at the same time. Ella Branham dreamed that Bill was living in the west and building a house on a hill. She saw her son lying on his back, suffering from his sour stomach. Then she saw six white doves fly down and land on his chest. They cooed as though they were trying to tell him something. Then they flew away in the form of the letter "S." Bill had often wondered about his mother's dream, because it coincided with the vision and the Lord's cryptic injunction, "*Remember, it's only six inches long.*" In God's numerology, the number six is associated with man because God created Adam on the sixth day. Six is an incomplete number. After six days of creating, God rested on the seventh day. Seven signifies completion. The six doves in his mother's

dream represented God's mercy coming to him six times in his life and healing him of his sour stomach. Each healing was temporary, lasting about seven or eight years. Since 1948 he had waited longingly to see a seventh white dove that would tell him his suffering was over.

Through this stretch of canyon the trail was not flat, but rose and dropped from ledge to ledge, meaning Bill had to concentrate on where he put his feet so he wouldn't twist an ankle. He noticed a flash of brilliant white ahead of him, definitely out-of-place among the pastel colors of the dry upper slopes. Lifting his head, he was surprised to see a dove standing on the trail. Its feathers looked as white as falling snow. "It must be a vision," Bill thought, rubbing his eyes. "Surely it's a vision." The bird had its head cocked sideways, allowing the round eye in the side of its head to look right at him. Then it blinked—once, twice, three times. That told him it was real. A dove in a vision wouldn't blink unless there was a specific reason for it to blink. Bill left the trail and passed the bird on the downward slope. It didn't fly. When Bill rejoined the trail, the

dove was still looking at him, only now from the eye on the other side of its head. It watched him until he was out of sight behind the next bend in the trail. When he returned an hour later, it was gone. Bill thought, "As a son of Abraham, I consider not what the doctor told me; I'm going to be well, anyhow!"

On Wednesday morning, September 22, 1965, he returned yet again to Sabino Canyon. This time there were no doubts threatening him like rattlesnakes. This morning his purpose was simply to praise the Lord for His kindness and mercy. When he came to the "T" in the trail, this time he turned to his left and hiked north. About 11:30 Bill got thirsty, so he climbed down to the canyon bottom and drank from a deep, clear pool, where the water gathered as the creek trickled over and around granite boulders. The day was already warm and getting hotter. Taking off his shirt, he tied it around his waist and climbed back up the slope to reach the trail. High above him, where the cliffs touched the eastern sky, some of the rocks resembled a giant eagle with its head turned, looking back over its folded wings. Tiring in his climb, he stopped to rest in

the shade of a boulder that was nearly twice his height and was shaped roughly like a pyramid. A glance at his watch told him it was almost noon. Inside his mind a voice said, “*Lay your hands against this rock and pray.*” Obediently, he laid his hands on the boulder, leaning into it so that his cheek pressed against the relatively cool surface. Turning his face up toward those rocks on top of the cliffs that resembled an eagle, Bill prayed, “God in heaven, thank You for...”

Before he finished his sentence, a voice rumbled down from the cliffs above him, asking, “*What are you leaning against, over your heart?*” Startled, Bill pushed himself back and looked closely at the boulder in front of him. There, embedded in the surface of the rock at the height of his heart, was the word:

E a g l e

The letters were formed out of white quartz and stood out clearly against the darker-colored granite. The first letter in “Eagle” looked like a capital “E.” The other four letters were spelled in English script,

although they were not connected as script most often is. Each letter was distinct unto itself. All the letters were roughly level with each other and equally spaced apart. It was as if, when the rocks in this canyon were formed, God inlaid some white quartz into this boulder and positioned it on the cliffs above. Then, during some earthquake, or perhaps when the government was blasting to build the canyon road, it tumbled down and split as it fell, coming to rest near the bottom of the slope, and waiting until this day to speak its message. It would turn out to be the final confirmation of William Branham’s ministry.⁴⁹²

⁴⁹² A few months after William Branham’s death, Pearry Green and Harold McClintock went to Sabino Canyon and searched along the northern trail until they located this huge boulder with the word “Eagle” spelled out in white quartz that was imbedded into the darker-colored granite. They took a number of photographs which can be seen on Tucson Tabernacle’s website: tucsontabernacle.com

Chapter 95

His Last Days

1965

BEGINNING on Thanksgiving Day, William Branham preached five times in Shreveport, Louisiana, at Life Tabernacle, the church where Jack Moore was the pastor. On Thursday night, November 25, 1965, he spoke on the “Invisible Union of the Bride of Christ.” This marriage, he proposed, is going on right now. It happens whenever a person hears and receives the vindicated Word for this age. Jesus, the Bridegroom, is that vindicated Word. Paul explained this mystery in Ephesians 5:25-27: *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”* Bill said, “If you

are standing with God’s Word, then you are standing completely justified like you never did it in the first place. Hallelujah! Talk about a Thanksgiving. I am more thankful for that than anything else I know of. You are the pure, virtuous, sinless Bride of the Son of the living God. Every man and woman who is born of the spirit of God, washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, and believes every Word of God, stands as though you never sinned in the first place. You are perfect through the blood of Jesus Christ. Pull away from the shuck and get out here in the sun where you can ripen with the rest of the wheat crop. I hear the coming of the combine. You are going to a wedding in the sky, and you are wearing the wedding band of predestinated, unmerited grace. God did it Himself. He knew you before the foundation of the world, so He slipped the wedding band on you by putting your name on the Lamb’s Book of Life. What a Thanksgiving! Hallelujah! Praise our God!”

On Friday night Bill preached “Works Is Faith Expressed,” where he explained two Scriptures that at first glance might seem to contradict each other. James 2:21-23 said that Abraham was justified by his works

and not by faith only; whereas in Romans 4:1-8, Paul said that Abraham was justified by faith, and not by works. These Scriptures don't contradict each other; they are merely different sides of the same coin. James was looking at Abraham from man's point of view, and Paul was looking at Abraham from God's point of view. People can only be saved through faith in Jesus Christ; but genuine faith in Christ will naturally express itself through good works.

On Saturday morning Jack Moore hosted a breakfast at a local hotel, after which Bill spoke on the subject of "Trying to Do God a Service Without It Being the Will of God." That night, back again in Life Tabernacle, he preached "I Have Heard but Now I See." He took this title from Job 42:5. After God talked to Job out of a whirlwind, Job says, "*I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee.*" Bill explained what Job meant, and then he showed how this Scripture applies to the twentieth century, using his own ministry as the example. What story did he use? He could have picked any one of the hundreds of thousands of visions,

prophecies, miracles, and supernatural events that he had lived through during his 56 years. He chose to relate his experience in 1959 when God taught him the meaning of Mark 11:23—if you tell this mountain to move and throw itself into the sea, and you really believe it will happen, it will happen. He told how he was hunting squirrels at the time, and not having any success at it. God told him to say whatever he wanted, and it would happen. He said he wanted his hunting limit of squirrels, and from nothing but cold air the squirrels appeared, and he shot them.

On Sunday morning, November 28, 1965, Bill preached "God's Only Provided Place of Worship," (which is under the shed blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God.) Then on Sunday night he preached a sermon he called "On the Wings of a Snow White Dove." He borrowed this title from a popular country-and-western song that he had heard playing on his car radio while driving across the country. The song had a Christian theme which made it appeal to him. During this sermon Bill told his audience how God had spoken to him while he was hiking in Sabino Canyon,

and how God gave him a sign through a snow white dove. At the end of this sermon he sang the song “On the Wings of a Dove.”

Noah had drifted on the flood many days,
He searched for land in various ways;
Troubles, he had some; but not from above,
God gave him His sign on the wings of a dove.

On the wings of a snow-white dove,
God sends His pure, sweet love,
A sign from above,
On the wings of a dove.

Jesus, our Savior, came to earth one day;
He was born in a stable, in a manger with hay;
Though here rejected, but not from above,
God gave us His sign on the wings of a dove.

On the wings of a snow-white dove,
God sends His pure, sweet love,
A sign from above,
On the wings of a dove.

So far Bill had followed the words of the popular song as closely as he could remember them. Now he added a third verse that he had composed himself.

Though I have suffered in many ways,
I cried for healing both night and day;
Faith wasn't forgotten by the Father above,
He gave me His sign on the wings of a dove.

He followed this song with an old-fashioned prayer-line. Jack Moore said later that, of all the meetings he had shared with William Branham, nothing compared to the spirit of love, faith and worship that flowed through Life Tabernacle that night.

DURING the first week of December, William Branham made a quick preaching trip into Southern California. His first stop was in Yuma, a city at the southwestern corner of Arizona, near the California and Mexican borders. On Saturday night, December 4,

1965, he spoke at a Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship banquet at the Ramada Inn. His subject was "The Rapture;" that is, the secret catching away of the Bride of Christ before the great tribulation period. He read 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-17:

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to

meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Among the many points he made, perhaps the most significant one is his explanation of the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. He said, "The first thing that sounds is a shout, a message from a messenger, getting the people ready. The second thing that sounds is the voice of the resurrection—the same voice that called Lazarus from the grave in John 11:38 through 44. The third thing that sounds is a trumpet, calling the people to the Lamb's supper in the sky with His Bride (remember the type in the Old Testament—a trumpet always called the Jews to their Feast of the Trumpets.) See, the first thing that comes forth is His message, calling the Bride together. The next thing is a resurrection of the sleeping Bride, those believers who died back in the other church ages. They're caught together and the trumpet calls them all to the feast in the sky. We're right there ready now. There is only one thing left—the church that comes out needs to ripen in the sun. The great combine will

come by after a while. The stalks will be burned, but the grain will be gathered into the garner.”

“I am telling you this because it is life; because I’m responsible to God for saying it. I must say it. My faith-healing ministry was just to catch the people’s attention. All the time I knew a message would come, and here it is. Those seven seals opened, and those mysteries were revealed.”

“One day when I started to preach these seven church ages, I called Jack Moore, who is a great theologian. I said, ‘Jack, who is this person in Revelation chapter 1 who is like the Son of man, standing there with His hair as white as wool?’ I said, ‘Jesus was a young man. How could He have hair as white as wool?’ Jack said, ‘Brother Branham, that was His glorified body.’ That didn’t ring true to me. When I went into my room and started praying, God told me what it really was. See, I’ve always preached that Jesus was deity, not just a man. He was God manifested in the flesh—the attribute of God’s love come down and displayed here on earth. Jesus was God’s love, which built a body that Jehovah Himself

lived in. He was the fullness of the Godhead bodily. What God was He manifested through that body. That body had to die so He could wash the Bride with His blood. Not only is His Bride washed and forgiven, she is justified. In God’s sight she never did it in the first place. She is standing there married to the virtuous Son of God. She was foreordained. She was trapped into this world of sin, but when she heard the truth and came forth, the blood of the Lamb of God cleansed her. Then she stands there virtuous—no sin on her at all. Therefore, the message calls the Bride together. That is the shout.”

After this service ended, Bill received a pleasant surprise. The first copy of his book, *An Exposition on the Seven Church Ages*, was placed in his hands. Hard bound with a dark blue cover, the book had 381 pages divided into ten chapters. The first chapter was called “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” and the last chapter was called “A Resume of the Ages.” His book was filled with Bible verses, church history and personal comments, all masterfully interwoven into a beautiful picture.

On Sunday night Bill preached at an Assembly of God church in Rialto, California, fifty miles east of Los Angeles. He called this sermon “Things That Are To Be,” and he said he was continuing where he left off the previous night in Yuma. His Bible text was John 14:1-7, where Jesus said:

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.” Thomas saith unto him, ‘Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?’ Jesus saith unto him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father

also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him.”

Bill noted how this text was often used at funerals. In retrospect, this sermon sounds as if he was preaching his own funeral service—not in a sad, reflective way, but joyously looking forward to better things to come. Bill said, “I’m thankful for open doors like this church that has allowed me to come in and inspire young men like your pastor. I’m beginning to get old, and I know that my days are numbered. I know now that these young men can take this message and sweep it on to the coming of the Lord (if He doesn’t come in my generation—which, I’m hoping to see Him. . . I look daily for Him and watch, keeping myself prepared for that hour.)”

Bill talked about the infinite mind of God in relationship to our limited understanding of life and the universe. Our finite minds cannot fathom what infinite means. Bill said that God knows everything that ever was, everything that is now, and everything that ever will be; therefore, nothing is out of kilter

with His plans. He planned your birth and He knows the second you will die. Our minds are limited. For us, life seems full of uncertainties. None of us knows the hour we will die. You might be killed today in an accident, or you might die tonight from a heart attack. But death isn't the end. Jesus said, "I am going to prepare a place for you." After death, Christians will continue their lives in another place. It won't be a spirit-world. It will be a real place, like the Garden of Eden, where we will eat and drink, work and play, and worship our Creator. In that paradise we will have real bodies.

Bill explained that these "new bodies" are the "mansions" Jesus said He would prepare for us. Each mansion will be different. God likes variety. He made each of us different here on earth. It will be that way in heaven too. And not just our physical characteristics; our personalities in heaven will be as different and varied as they are here on earth. Notice the variety of men who Jesus chose to be apostles. Peter was brash and became a fiery preacher. Andrew was more cautious and prayed all the time. Paul was more

scholarly. You can't judge one apostle better than another. They were different because God made them that way. Look at the variety of personalities that exist among Christians. Some are boisterous and dogmatic; others are quiet and kind; and many other shades of personalities exist between those two extremes—but they are all part of the Kingdom of God, if they are born again. That is the one thing every Christian has in common—he or she is filled with a portion of God's spirit.

There is only one kind of eternal life and that is God's life, so God's life must be in you in order for you to live forever. If God's spirit dwells inside you, that makes you an attribute of God. Bill said, "If we are those attributes of God, we cannot live by creeds or by denominationalism; we must live by the Word. The Bride of Christ is a part of the Bridegroom like any wife is a part of her husband; therefore, we must be a Word-Bride. What is a Word-Bride? It is the manifestation for this hour. The Bride is not a creed or a denomination, but a living attribute of God, displaying God's attributes to the world."

Near the end of this sermon he told about his experience going beyond the curtain of time, where God gave him a glimpse of the paradise that awaits Christians. By calling this sermon “Things That Are To Be,” Bill was pointing to the one certainty in the future of every Christian. Jesus made a fantastic promise. Can we trust Him to keep it? The answer is a resounding yes! Through many signs and wonders (including breaking the grip of death) Jesus proved He was Almighty God living as a real man, and therefore, He is fully able to do what He promised He would do. “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” Every believer in Christ shares this hope with confidence.

The following night at a Full Gospel Business Men’s banquet in San Bernardino, Bill spoke on the subject of “Modern Events Made Clear By Prophecy.” His text came from Luke 24: 13-27. After Jesus rose from the dead, He walked with two men to the small town of Emmaus. The men didn’t recognize Him at first,

and so they told Him what they knew about Jesus of Nazareth and His crucifixion a few days earlier. Jesus said to them, *“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?” And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

Bill suggested some of the Scriptures Jesus may have referred to that afternoon on the road to Emmaus:

Psalms 16:10—He was resurrected from the dead.

Psalms 22:1—He cried at the cross, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

Psalms 22: 7-8—He was mocked by His enemies.

Psalms 22:16—It was fulfilled that “They pierced My hands and My feet.”

Psalms 22:18—It was also fulfilled that “they parted My garments among them.”

Psalms 35:11—He was accused by false witnesses.

Psalms 41:9—He was betrayed by His friends.

Isaiah 7:14—a virgin shall conceive.

Isaiah 9:6—Unto us a child is born...

Isaiah 50:6—He was scourged.

Isaiah 53:7—He kept silent before His accusers.

Isaiah 53:9—He was buried with rich brethren.

Isaiah 53:12—He died with criminals.

Zechariah 11:12—He was sold for thirty pieces of silver.

Zechariah 13:7—He was forsaken by His disciples.

Malachi 3—John the Baptist was His forerunner.

Furthermore, consider all of the types Jesus might have referred to throughout the Old Testament—like Genesis 22, where Abraham took his son, Isaac, up on top of a mountain with the intention of sacrificing him to satisfy God's command.

Bill's point was this: Jesus used Scriptures to explain the important spiritual events of that day. Likewise, Christians can understand the important spiritual events of today by connecting them with the Scriptural prophecies meant for this day. Bill alluded to his own ministry, but he didn't have time at this banquet to list all of the Scriptures that apply. Bill said, "Watch Him.

Jesus referred them to the Word of God. He never came right out and said, 'Don't you know Me? I am the Messiah that is resurrected.' He didn't say that. He just gave them the Scriptures and they had to judge for themselves. John the Baptist did the same thing. Now, people, don't go to sleep; judge for yourselves."

The following evening, December 7, Bill preached on "Leadership" in Covina, California, at another Full Gospel Business Men's banquet. He again used the rich young ruler of Mark 10:17-22 as his text, a fitting type of this wealthy, self-satisfied Laodicean church age. He described this young ruler as a successful businessman who was concerned about his soul. This businessman saw that there was something different about Jesus and he hoped Jesus would tell him how he could be sure he had eternal life. When Jesus told him to forget about his wealth and follow Him, the young businessman couldn't do it because he thought the cost was too high. He wanted to "be somebody" in the eyes of the world.

Bill contrasted this attitude with that of a young man named Moses, who forsook his wealth and high

position in Egypt to follow Christ because he recognized that Christ was the greatest treasure of all. Bill pointed out that the greatest “somebody” you could ever be is to be a son or daughter of God. When the pyramids are dust and Egypt is a distant memory, Moses will still be alive because he accepted the leadership of Christ instead of going along with the ways of the world.

Today the leadership of Christ is accomplished through His Holy Spirit, which points people to His Word. Bill said, “You cannot come to God through creeds, or through a denomination. There’s only one thing you can do: accept Jesus on His terms; be willing to die to yourself and all your worldly thoughts, and follow Him. Jesus said, ‘Get rid of all the things of the world, and follow Me.’ That is the only way to have eternal life. So the leadership of God today will cause you to follow the vindicated Word of the hour by the Holy Ghost.”

There is a feeling of earnest in Bill’s delivery, almost of desperation, as if he suspected he didn’t have much longer to live and he was using this night to summarize the most important points of his last five years of preaching. In his closing prayer, he said, “I pray, Father, that if anyone here tonight is ordained to

eternal life, may they accept it now. Break up their stony hearts. If they want peace, if they want something that satisfies, something that gives assurance, may they accept the leadership of Christ tonight, which will lead them into a peace that passes all understanding, a joy that is full, and into something that death itself cannot harm. Grant it, Father.”

BACK AROUND the first of November, 1965, Pearry Green had located an empty building near downtown Tucson that was suitable to use for a church. It had once been a Jewish synagogue; in fact it was the first Jewish synagogue built in Tucson. By the middle of November Pearry had rented this building, cleaned it up and opened its doors for worship. He named it Tucson Tabernacle.

The first time William Branham spoke in Tucson Tabernacle was on Sunday, November 21, 1965. He asked Pearry Green if he could have five minutes to tell everyone how happy he was to finally have a church in Tucson where he and his family could attend

regularly. He took twenty-seven minutes. In a way it was a dedication service, although he spoke more about the dedication of Christians rather than dedicating a building. He ended by laying his hands on the new pastor and praying for Pearry and his family.

The last time Bill spoke at Tucson Tabernacle was on Sunday evening, December 12, 1965. After Pearry Green's sermon, Bill talked for 34 minutes about the importance of taking communion (that is, the Lord's Supper). He said, "There are three physical things left for us to do—baptism in water, the Lord's Supper, and foot-washing. These are divine orders. We must do these three things as symbols."⁴⁹³ His sermon "Communion" would turn out to be his last recorded message. When he finished his short sermon, he asked the Lord to bless the wine and the bread, and then he served communion to several hundred people who had come to church that night. After everyone else had been served, he took a glass of wine from the tray, held it up before the congregation and said, (quoting Jesus), "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine,

⁴⁹³ Baptism—Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38. Communion—1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Foot-washing—John 13: 2-15.

until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God."⁴⁹⁴

Later that week Bill asked Dawson Riley to come over to his duplex and help him sort through his gun collection. Although Dawson was several decades younger than Bill, the two men had hunted together often and had become good friends.

Dawson arrived at Bill's duplex an hour before noon. Bill explained his dilemma. He wanted to display some of his rifles and hand guns in his new den, but he owned too many guns to show them all. So he wanted Dawson to help him decide which guns he should display. Meda was gone for the day, giving Bill the freedom to work in several rooms. One by one he pulled guns from boxes and laid them across beds, tables, chairs, and countertops. As Dawson handled each gun, Bill told him all about it. Bill remembered the history of every rifle and hand gun he owned—how he got it and what he had shot with it.

Around noon, Bill asked Dawson if he would like to ride with him downtown and get something to eat.

⁴⁹⁴ Mark 14:25

They drove to a Mexican restaurant. On their way back to the duplex, Bill said, “You know, Dawson, I didn’t buy any of those guns. Every one of them was a gift. In fact, sometimes I will get a gun in the mail along with a gift card that isn’t signed.”

“That’s amazing, Brother Branham. You wouldn’t even know who to thank for it.”

“Oh, you would be surprised,” Bill said, and then he smiled a peculiar smile as if he knew an amusing secret.

Dawson was intrigued. “What do you mean?”

“For an example, suppose a UPS truck stopped by my house, and the driver gave me a package with a rifle inside. Let’s say it was the new Sako model L61R Finnbear. You realize that would be an expensive gift.”

“Sako?” Dawson mused. “Isn’t that a Finnish company?”

“Yes, it is. Sako makes some of the finest rifles in the world. Now let’s suppose that the person who sent me this gift wanted to remain anonymous, so the card just said: ‘From a brother who loves you.’ Some of my guns came just like that.”

Back at the duplex they continued their project of sorting firearms by discussing the merits and personal history of each gun. Sometime in the middle of the afternoon, Bill asked, “What pulled up out front?”

They were working in the back of the house and Dawson hadn’t heard anything, but he said, “I’ll go outside and look.” He walked to the front door and stepped outside. A United Parcel Service delivery truck was parked by the curb. The delivery man opened the truck’s cargo door and pulled out a long, narrow cardboard box. He carried it over to Dawson Riley and said, “I have a package for Bill Branham.”

“Yes, sir,” Dawson replied. “He lives here. I’ll sign for it.”

The box obviously contained a rifle, and Dawson was pretty sure he knew what kind it would turn out to be, because of that little “example” Bill had given him three and a half hours earlier. During their many hunting excursions he had watched Bill’s gift manifest itself in so many amazing ways, nothing seemed impossible.

Taking the box in the house, Dawson set it on the kitchen table. Bill pulled off the packaging tape and opened it. Inside was a new Sako rifle—a model L61R Finnbear. There was a card in the box that said, “From a brother who loves you;” but it wasn’t signed.

Dawson let out a short, low whistle.

Flashing that same peculiar smile as he had in the car on the way home from lunch, Bill said, “The brother thinks I don’t know who sent it, but I do.”

The next day Bill took Pearry Green out to the house he had bought so he could show Pearry his new den room. As soon as they parked in the driveway, Pearry noticed an old wagon wheel decorating the yard, leaning against a saguaro cactus. It was a wooden wheel with a metal rim, the kind early settlers used on their wagons. A couple of spokes were missing. When Pearry asked about the broken wagon wheel, Bill explained how 28 years ago, right after his wife and daughter had died, he dreamed that Sharon Rose met him out West by an old wagon with a broken wheel. Of course, she was just a baby when she died, but in the dream she was a beautiful young woman. Sharon

greeted him and pointed out the path to Paradise where her mother, Hope, was waiting for him. Bill told Pearry that he put this old broken wagon wheel in his yard to remind him of his first family that was broken by tragedy. His new home represented his second family with Meda, Rebekah, Sarah, and Joseph.

Bill and Pearry entered the den through a door on the east end of the room. The wooden door panels were decorated with hand-carved pictures of wild animals. One striking carving showed a large African lion. The room had wood paneling on three walls, wooden beams on the ceiling, and slate rock tiles on the floor, giving the den a rustic, masculine décor. Large picture windows graced the northern wall, providing a beautiful view of the Catalina Mountains only a few miles away. An impressive stone fireplace was set at an angle in the southwest corner of the room. A mural of a desert canyon was painted on the western wall. It showed reddish cliffs that overlooked a stream trickling over and between reddish boulders. A buck and a doe stood upon a ridge, watching the stream that was flowing into the northwest corner of the room.

There the painted stream met an actual circulating stream of water that cascaded over some rocks into a shallow pool.

The room was full of rifles, hand guns, hunting trophies, and mementos from his travels. The walls abounded with the stuffed and mounted heads of animals he had killed on various hunting trips: buck deer, antelope, elk, caribou, a moose, a mountain goat, a ram, and three javelina boars.⁴⁹⁵ The caribou head came from the animal he shot in British Columbia in September of 1961; the same caribou that (four months before he shot it) God told him through a vision it would have 42-inch-long antlers. On the floor in front of the fireplace lay a rug made from the silver-tipped grizzly bear he shot on that same hunting trip. Beside the bearskin rug lay a rug made from an African leopard, a gift from Sidney Jackson. Mounted on a wall-plaque was the world's largest trout—the

⁴⁹⁵ William Branham couldn't display any animals from his safari in Africa. He had left his 33 hunting trophies at the airport in Beira, Mozambique, with instructions for his air carrier to fly them back to the United States. Unfortunately, the trophies never arrived in the U.S., which meant they were stolen in Mozambique. Because the airline was at fault, it offered Bill free airfare to Africa for another safari. Of course, he never had the chance to make use of their offer.

fish he had caught in Idaho's Salmon River in October of 1957. On a polished redwood table stood a Golden eagle, wings spread, poised for flight. In the corner by the window, a stuffed bobcat snarled at a squirrel, while a snow white dove watched from above. When the taxidermist finished working on the mountain lion he had shot in January, Bill wanted to set it by the pool in the corner so it looked like the cougar had just come for a drink of water.

Of course the den had a desk which supported a line of reference books and several Bibles. The desk and books were for the man of study. The bearskin rug was for the man of prayer. The wall mural and picture windows were for the man of vision. The guns and hunting trophies were for the man of the wilderness.

ON FRIDAY, December 17, 1965, Meda packed suitcases full of clothes for her family and Bill loaded the suitcases into the back end of his 1964 Ford station wagon. Sarah and Joseph had just gotten out of school for their Christmas break, so Bill planned on taking his

family back to Jeffersonville for the holidays. On Sunday morning, the day after Christmas, he wanted to deliver a Christmas message at Branham Tabernacle—a sermon he planned to call, “Unto Us a Child Is Born.” Also, he had arranged to hold a special meeting at the Parkview Junior High School auditorium in Jeffersonville later that week. He wanted to teach on a subject he planned to call “The Trail of The Serpent.” He estimated it would take him about four hours to outline the trail of the serpent through the Bible, beginning with the beast in the Garden of Eden and then following Cain’s genetic line all the way to the Beast in the book of Revelation.

Rebekah was not going with her family on this trip. She was 19 years old and she was engaged to a soldier named George Smith. George had a two-week leave from the army and was coming to Tucson for Christmas. Rebekah, of course, wanted to spend as much time as she could with her fiancé. Bill asked his oldest daughter to move the family’s clothes and the smaller household items from their Park Avenue rental duplex to their new home in the foothills. The new

furniture they had ordered was supposed to be delivered before Christmas. If their clothes and kitchen utensils were moved while they were out of town, then, when the family returned, they could move right into their new house.

Before dawn on Saturday, December 18, 1965, Bill roused his children from sleep and hustled them into the back seat of his tan station wagon. Meda sat in the front passenger seat and Bill sat behind the steering wheel. The air smelled fresh from the rain that had fallen over Tucson during the night. Before leaving town, he drove to his son’s house where Billy Paul had his red Chevrolet packed and ready. Billy Paul and Loyce were taking their four-year-old son, Paul, on this trip, but they were leaving their thirteen-month-old son, David, with a babysitter. Billy Paul took the lead and together the two cars headed east on Interstate Highway 10. By six o’clock the lights of Tucson were behind them.

It was 1,750 miles from Tucson, Arizona, to Jeffersonville, Indiana. During the last two years Bill had driven between his two homes several times, so he

knew the route well. Usually the trip took him two and a half days to drive.

Twelve hours and 500 miles later, they stopped to eat supper at a restaurant in Clovis, New Mexico, about eight miles from the Texas border. Bill didn't feel very hungry, so he only asked for a piece of lemon meringue pie. Bill and Billy Paul discussed their options and agreed to drive another 100 miles, and then stop for the night in Amarillo, Texas. A weather report on the radio said it was snowing in Amarillo, but that didn't worry them. They were used to driving on snow-covered roads. On their way out to their cars, ten-year-old Joseph asked his father if he could ride with Billy Paul. Normally Bill kept his youngest son with him, but tonight he said Joe could ride with his older brother.

Again Billy Paul took the lead in his car. Bill followed close behind. Fourteen-year-old Sarah, happy to have the entire back seat of the station wagon for herself, lay down and fell asleep. It was dark now. Clouds hid the stars. A crescent moon struggled to shine its hazy light through the overcast sky.

The small town of Texico, New Mexico, sits right before the state's border with Texas. On the east end of Texico they needed to make a left turn to get on Highway 60 heading northeast to Amarillo. It was a difficult intersection, one where a traffic island shielded a turn-only lane. Billy Paul made this turn, but his father missed it. Billy Paul pulled over to the side of the road to wait. He looked at his watch and saw it was 7:20 p.m. Five minutes later, he saw his father make the correct turn onto Highway 60. Billy Paul put his Chevrolet into gear and steered his car back onto the road in front of his father.

Now they were in Texas. They needed to pass through seven small towns before they would reach Amarillo. The second town they drove through was Bovina. The next town on their route would be Friona. Since this stretch of highway was straight, flat, and had wide shoulders, Billy Paul felt comfortable driving the speed limit of 65 miles per hour. Approximately three miles southwest of Friona, Billy Paul came up behind a slower moving car in his lane, which he passed. As he moved back into the right lane,

he noticed a single headlight approaching him in opposite lane. At first he thought it was an oncoming motorcycle. Almost too late he realized it was a car with its driver-side headlight out, driving down the center of the road. Jerking his steering wheel to the right, Billy Paul swerved onto the shoulder, narrowly missing his own destruction. The offending car raced past him without swerving, as though the driver was drunk and oblivious to any danger. As Billy Paul swung back onto the highway, he looked in his rearview mirror to see if the car he had just passed would escape unharmed. He saw the crash, heard it distinctly, and felt it as a knot of horror in his chest. Instinctively he pressed his foot on the brake pedal.

Loyce turned her head in the direction of the crash. She screamed, "It's your daddy's car!"

Looping his car into a U-turn, Billy Paul sped back towards the accident. "It can't be Daddy," he said with a shaky voice. "The car I just passed was between me and Dad!" When he reached the accident, his headlights revealed a nightmarish scene of smashed cars and damaged bodies. One car was a 1959

Chevrolet sedan; the other was his father's Ford station wagon. Because the Chevrolet had straddled the center line, the Ford had struck it left-headlight-to-left-headlight, causing the two cars to twist violently as they crumpled. The right front wheel of the Bill's station wagon was not damaged, but the left front wheel was jammed way back into the engine compartment. The two machines now sat many feet apart, steam rising from both of their mangled radiators. Oil and broken glass littered the pavement between them. The impact had thrown the driver of the Chevrolet onto the highway where he was laying face down and motionless. At the moment he was being checked by the man whose car Billy Paul had passed. All this Billy Paul saw in an instant. Then he saw his father. The impact had thrown him forward so violently that his upper body had crashed through the windshield.⁴⁹⁶ Now he was lying half-in and half-out of the car. Meda and Sarah were nowhere in sight.

As soon as Billy Paul parked his car, Loyce opened her door and ran toward the station wagon. Billy Paul

⁴⁹⁶ In 1965 most cars did not have seatbelts.

told Joseph and Paul to stay in the car, and then he followed his wife. Loyce had gone to the passenger side to find Meda and Sarah; Billy Paul tried to help his father. Bill's head lay on the damaged hood. His left arm was trapped in the mangled door, and his left leg was actually twisted around the steering wheel column. Swiftly Billy Paul examined his father's predicament. It looked hopeless. He reached over the twisted hood and cradled his father's head in his hands. Just then Joseph screamed.

Without opening his eyes, Bill asked, "Who was that?"

"That was Joseph," Billy Paul answered.

"Tell Joseph everything is okay," Bill said weakly. After a moment's hesitation, he asked, "Can you get me out?"

"No, I can't." Then he had an inspiration. "Dad, look at me."

Bill opened his eyes. They looked distant.

Billy Paul said, "If you speak the word, Dad, you will come out of there."

Bill closed his eyes and turned his head away from his son.

From the other side of the car, Loyce cried, "Billy, your mother is dead."

Billy Paul ran to the other side of the car, where he found Meda crumpled on the floor, squeezed between the seat and the car heater. He felt for her pulse, first trying to find it in her neck, then in her wrist. He couldn't find it. As far as he could tell, her heart had stopped pumping. He heard Sarah moan from the back seat. Running back around the car, he leaned close to his father and said, "Dad, I know you are hurt really bad, but I don't know how to get you out without hurting you worse. I have to wait until help arrives. I can hear Sarah, and I think she will be okay; but Dad, I think Mom is dead."

Bill lifted his head slightly and asked, "Where is she?"

"She is down on the floor to your right."

Slowly, painfully, Bill reached down with his right hand until he felt his wife. Then he prayed, "Lord,

don't let Mommy die. Be with us at this hour." A moment later Meda moved slightly and moaned.

Billy Paul asked, "Should I try to get Mom out of the car?"

"No," whispered Bill, "just leave her until help comes; and leave Sarah too."

By now more cars had stopped and many people were offering to help. Someone drove into Friona to notify the State Patrol of the accident. Police cars, an ambulance, and a tow truck converged on the scene. Paramedics extracted Meda and Sarah from the wagon, loaded them into the ambulance and rushed them to the hospital in Friona. Soon the ambulance returned for the occupants of the other car. The driver of the 1959 Chevrolet was dead, but his three passengers were still alive, although seriously injured.⁴⁹⁷

While the ambulance shuttled people to the hospital, rescue workers struggled to extricate Bill from the

wrecked station wagon. His left elbow was pinched in the twisted metal of the door. Using crowbars and sledge hammers the rescuers tried to force the door open, but without success. Everyone at the scene knew that time was running out if they were going to save Bill's life. A man who was a bystander suggested a risky plan. Billy Paul wanted to try it. This man was driving a four-wheel drive truck equipped with a heavy chain. He positioned his truck in front of the station wagon and hooked his chain to the door jamb support. At the same time the tow truck hooked its chain to the wagon's rear bumper. When the tow truck pulled, the station wagon stretched by a few fractions of an inch. That was enough. Entering the wrecked car through a backseat door, Billy Paul was now able to free his father's arm from the front door. Next he reached under the dash and untangled his father's left leg from the steering column. As carefully as he could, he lifted and pulled his father toward the door where other strong arms waited to help him.

Billy Paul rode with his father in the ambulance to the small hospital in Friona. The medical staff there

⁴⁹⁷ Later Billy Paul learned that the driver of the 1959 Chevrolet was a seventeen-year-old farm worker named Santiago Luis Ramos. Around the end of November he had been released from a state reformatory, and three days before the accident he had purchased this car with a down payment of \$100. He and his three friends had been drinking alcohol. Open bottles of alcohol were found in the wrecked Chevrolet.

soon realized that Bill's injuries were too severe for them to save his life with their limited equipment. They arranged to transfer Bill, Meda, and Sarah to Northwest Texas Hospital in Amarillo. Meda and Sarah were immediately loaded in an ambulance and sent on this seventy-mile journey. Bill's condition was not yet stable enough to risk keeping him in an ambulance for 90 minutes. His body had gone into shock and he needed a blood transfusion if he was going to live through the night. Unfortunately, this little hospital didn't have enough of the necessary blood type in their blood bank to give him all that he needed. Billy Paul offered to give some of his blood, but screening revealed his blood was not compatible with his father's. A local sheriff offered to give some of his blood, and it turned out to be a proper match. At six o'clock in the morning Bill was loaded into an ambulance and dispatched. Again Billy Paul was allowed to ride in the back of the ambulance with his father.

They arrived at the hospital in Amarillo at 7:30 on Sunday morning, December 19. After inquiring about

his mother and sister, Billy Paul went to the waiting room where he telephoned family members and friends, telling them what he knew. Sarah had fractured several vertebrae in her spine. Her spinal cord had not been damaged and she still had feeling in her legs and arms, so the doctors there believed she would eventually be all right. Sarah also had severe cuts in her mouth from orthopedic braces she was wearing at the time of the accident. Meda's outcome was less promising. She had cuts, bruises, broken bones, and a concussion. Bill's condition was even worse than Meda's. Because the bones in his left arm and left leg were broken in numerous places, the doctors there did not yet know if they could be properly re-aligned. While Billy Paul was making phone calls, doctors were operating on his father.

By now Billy Paul had been awake for 24 hours. He felt exhausted from the strain of his ordeal. At eight o'clock Pearry Green walked into the waiting room and offered to take over Billy Paul's self-imposed telephone duties. Billy Paul handed Pearry the phone along with a list of who to call; then he stretched out

on a couch and promptly fell asleep. After a while a nurse told Pearry that Mr. Branham had just come out from surgery and his condition was still critical. She asked if Pearry would like to see him. Pearry suggested they wake Billy Paul and let him go in to see his father, but the nurse thought it best to let him sleep.

Pearry entered the Intensive Care Unit, stopping first at Meda's bed. She was still unconscious. Her face had swollen so much that it was difficult to recognize her. A white curtain separated her bed from the other patients in the Intensive Care Unit. Pearry went next to Bill's bedside. Bill's left arm and leg were stretched taut in traction and he was breathing through a tube in his trachea. Pearry said, "Brother Branham, if you will just speak the word..."

Bill didn't answer. Softly Pearry sang "On the Wings of a Snow White Dove." Toward the end of this song, Bill opened his eyes. A slight smile creased his lips. Pearry said, "Brother Branham, last night I saw the moon as a crescent sliver of light with a blood red tear

drop at the bottom. I have never seen anything like it before."

Weakly, Bill squirmed like he wanted to sit up. He tried to say something, but his words were lost in the tracheotomy tube. The nurse came and said, "Mr. Green, your five minutes are up."

That was the last time William Branham responded to a human voice. He soon lapsed into a coma. Over the next three days many people came to Amarillo to support the Branham family with their presence at the hospital and their prayers. On Tuesday, December 21, Meda regained consciousness. Although she recognized Billy Paul and Rebekah, she couldn't remember anything about the accident.

On Wednesday doctors became concerned about excessive swelling in Bill's left eye. They determined it was caused by swelling in his brain, a serious condition that could result in death. They recommended an operation that would remove a small piece of the skull above his left temple. This should relieve the pressure inside his skull cavity. The decision whether or not to operate fell upon 30-year-

old Billy Paul. After consulting with his family and praying with the 65 Christians in the waiting room, Billy Paul signed the form that gave the doctors permission to operate. Although the procedure did what the doctors hoped it would do, Bill remained unconscious.

On Thursday Dr. Hines, an orthopedic surgeon, reported that the broken bones in Bill's left arm were moving back into place. Dr. Hines was hopeful that in a few more days he could remove Bill from traction and put a cast on his arm.

All through that week the phone in the hospital waiting room rang incessantly as people from all over the world called to ask about William Branham's condition. Men in the waiting room took turns answering the phone and giving reports. Pearry Green volunteered to answer the phone between three and six o'clock every morning. On Friday at 4:37 a.m. a nurse told Pearry that Reverend Branham had stopped breathing on his own, so she had connected him to a breathing machine. The hours passed. It was a cold, windy day outside and a gloomy, cheerless day in the

waiting room. Around five o'clock in the afternoon Billy Paul went to the hospital cafeteria to eat. Pearry Green sat in the waiting room. A nurse came out from the Intensive Care Unit with tears in her eyes. "Mr. Green, would you get Mr. Branham? Dr. Hines wants to see him."

"Is it finished?" Pearry asked.

She nodded and turned away. Pearry found Billy Paul in the cafeteria and gave him the message. Together the two men returned to the I.C.U. waiting room where a nurse asked them to wait in a consultation room next to the nurses' station. Soon Dr. Hines came in and said, "Mr. Branham, I have sad news to tell you. Your father passed away at 5:49 this afternoon."

It was December 24, 1965—Christmas Eve. Although he was only 56 years old, to all those who knew him, he was forever.

Shortly after Christmas Meda and Sarah Branham were flown to Jeffersonville and placed in Clark County Memorial Hospital. Although mother and

daughter were slowly getting better, neither was well enough to attend the funeral.

William Branham's funeral was held in Jeffersonville on Wednesday, December 29, 1965. Hundreds of people crowded into Branham Tabernacle and many more sat in their parked cars outside the Tabernacle, listening to the funeral service on their car radios. Reverend Orman Neville delivered the eulogy. As the funeral dismissed, it took over an hour for everyone to file past the casket and view the body one last time.

The body of William Branham was not buried that day. Instead, it was returned to Coots' Funeral Home where it was placed in a storage vault. Billy Paul wanted his stepmother to decide if her husband should be buried in Jeffersonville or in Tucson. Because Meda's thinking was still confused from her concussion, months passed before she felt well enough to decide.

On April 11, 1966, William Branham was buried in Eastern Cemetery on the corners of Eighth and Graham Streets in Jeffersonville, Indiana, just a block

away from Branham Tabernacle. Later, a pyramid-shaped monument was placed over his grave. On top of this five-foot tall pyramid, a bronze eagle stands with his wings raised and his talons open as though he is diving from the sky. Two Scriptures are engraved on the side of this pyramid. Malachi 4:5 is juxtaposed beside Revelation 10:7.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

* * * * *

But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets.

Afterword:

IF WILLIAM BRANHAM had been just a great evangelist with a further ministry in faith-healing, his story would have ended on Christmas Eve in 1965. Future generations would have read about his life with curiosity and fascination, the way we read about great evangelists of previous centuries. Christians are inspired when they read biographies about men like Charles Finney, Charles Spurgeon, Dwight Moody, and Smith Wigglesworth, but relatively few people study the sermons these men preached. Men and women who founded Christian movements do get more attention, but mostly this comes from historians, or from people who are ministering in that particular denomination or sect. William Branham's ministry is different. He was more than just a great evangelist,

and his influence goes beyond encouragement and inspiration. When he changed his emphasis from divine healing to Christian teaching, his decision had far-reaching results that are still multiplying today.

After William Branham died, Fred Sothmann remained at Branham Tabernacle and continued to mail tape recordings of William Branham's sermons to everyone who requested them. There were a lot of requests, and year by year the number of inquiries grew larger. The board of directors at Branham Tabernacle made the distribution of these tape-recorded sermons a priority. They also approved a request from Roy Borders that allowed him to transcribe and distribute these sermons in printed form.

In March of 1966 Roy Borders started a printing operation in Tucson that he named Spoken Word Publications. The first booklet he printed was the last sermon William Branham preached, titled "Communion." With Pearry Green's help, Borders printed 500 copies and sent them to people who had ordered tape recordings of William Branham's

sermons. He enclosed a letter saying that he planned to print more sermons and sell them for 25 cents per copy. As his mailing list expanded, donations increased, and within a year of its conception Spoken Word Publications was able to print and distribute William Branham's sermons free of charge. In 1967 Roy Borders printed a book containing William Branham's ten-sermon series on the seven seals, titled *The Revelation of the Seven Seals*. Because William Branham could not edit these sermons the way he had edited his book on the seven church ages, Roy Borders printed these sermons verbatim. This made them more difficult to read alone, but it made it easier for people to follow along in the book while they listened to the tape recordings. In March of 1969 Borders moved his printing operation from Tucson, Arizona, to Jeffersonville, Indiana.

Meda Branham died on May 12, 1981, at the age of 62. She was buried next to her husband in Jeffersonville. Roy Borders died in 1982, but by then Spoken Word Publications was a non-profit corporation with a life of its own. In June of 1986,

Spoken Word Publications merged with Branham Tabernacle's tape duplicating ministry under the name: Voice of God Recordings, Incorporated. Around this time, Joseph Branham assumed the leadership of both operations.

By the dawn of the new millennium, millions of copies of William Branham's sermons were being distributed each year in audio, digital and printed formats. Not all copies of these sermons came out of Jeffersonville. Many copies originated from various cities in the United States, Canada, South America, Europe, Africa, India, and Asia. Each year more and more of William Branham's sermons are being translated from English into other languages. Half a century after William Branham shifted his emphasis from faith-healing to Christian teaching, people all over the world are still studying to his sermons, believing that his teachings are helping them to prepare for Jesus Christ's return.

William Branham's life demonstrated what God can do with someone who humbly yields to the Holy Spirit. He started his life with many disadvantages.

After he surrendered to the love of Jesus Christ, he lived an extraordinary spiritual adventure. Patterning his life after godly men he read about in the Bible, he built his ministry on a solid scriptural foundation. Fame, money, political power, prestige—these status symbols of success meant nothing to him. He only wanted to fulfill the will of God for his life; and in so doing, glorify Jesus Christ. Many times that meant walking against the winds blowing from a rich, self-satisfied Laodicean church age. It was not an easy path to follow; but by following it, he left an indelible legacy.

In many ways William Branham's ministry was unique in modern history. He didn't borrow ideas from his contemporaries, or follow the shifting winds of public opinions. In one sense he blazed a new trail, for the world had never before seen one man display so much supernatural vindication. In another sense he merely cleared a very old trail that had become so overgrown with the branches of traditions that only traces of it remained. Now that the pathway is visible again, it remains for us to follow in his footsteps; not

to do what he did, but to go where he led—into the presence of Jesus Christ.

Endnotes and Sources

My endnotes list the source material for most of the stories in each chapter. Many of the details in this biography come from the personal testimony of William Branham as recorded in his 1,100+ sermons between 1947 and 1965. In my endnotes, these source sermons are listed by the year, month and day he preached them, and then by the page number (or paragraph number) within that sermon. The year will be in the form YY-MMDD. (For example: March 11, 1962 will be listed as 62-0311.) Morning and evening sermons are identified by “M” or “E” at the end of the date. If I show a page (or paragraph) number separated by a dash, it means I consulted all the material between those two numbers.

All of William Branham’s sermons have been transcribed and put into a searchable computer program called The Message Software Package. This program can be purchased at Branham.org; or it can be accessed free at Branham.org/MessageSearch.

If a sermon was not in print when the Message Search Program was put together, the program developers (Eagle Computing) numbered groupings of paragraphs. To set these arbitrary quotation identifiers apart from straight page or paragraph numbers, Eagle Computing placed a capital “E” in front of the quotation number.

The original printing of *The Revelation of the Seven Seals* did not have paragraph numbers; an updated version did. In these endnotes I have only listed the paragraph numbers from the updated version, which are identified by the brackets { }.

I benefited greatly from all of George Smith’s and Rebekah Branham Smith’s research that they published in *Only Believe* magazine. You can read many of these out-of-print issues on-line at Onlybelieve.com.

Chapter 82: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ”

Wm. Branham is taken beyond the curtain of time. Message sources: 60-0515m, 19-2 through 24-2; 60-0716, E87-E108; 60-0803, E27-E40; 61-0305, E17-E25; 63-0115, E8-E16; 63-0322, {347-429}; 65-1128m, 21-36; 65-1205, 117-129.

Quotation that begins: “That place is so much better. Honestly, I say this by eyewitness...” Message source: 60-0522m, 18-24.

Quotation that begins: “I want you people listening to these tapes to remember, this is to my church.” Message source: 60-0522m, 84.

Wm. Branham’s weariness and his prayer by the side of the road in Washington State; his August visit to Charlie Cox in Elkhorn, Kentucky, and his understanding

about his commission that came to him there, along with his Kentucky prayer, these are interspersed through the entire sermon of “As I Was With Moses, So I Will Be With Thee.” Message source: 60-0911m, but note specifically paragraphs 55-57 (edited), 202 (edited), and 217-219.

Wm. Branham meets a woman wearing a brown suit and skirt who signified a change in his ministry. Message sources: 57-0309E, E52; 59-0406, E12-E19; 63-0714E, 23-27.

Wm. Branham’s visions of a dark man attacking him; and then the Divine One who said, “You will stand as Moses stood.” Message sources: 60-0911m, 3-5; 62-1230m, 2-2.

Quotation that begins: “Now my ministry is changing,” and the next paragraph that begins, “Believe it and live!” Message source: 60-0911m, 180 and 220, respectively, edited.

Wm. Branham has two revelations in Sportsman’s Hollow, first concerning Malachi 4, and then concerning the seven church ages. Message sources: 62-1014m, 10-2 through 11-1; 61-0117, E48-E51; 60-1204m, 32-38.

The overview of the seven church ages is condensed from the series: Message sources: 60-1204m; 60-1204e; 60-1205; 60-1206; 60-1207; 60-1208; 60-1209; 60-1210; 60-1211m; 60-1211e; and the book, *An Exposition of the Seven Church Ages*, by Wm. Branham.

Quotation that begins: “This morning we take the subject of the Revelation of Jesus Christ...” Message source: 60-1204E, 58-59 and 144-146, edited.

Quotation that begins: “When this great Elijah comes at the end of this age...” Message source: 60-1211E, 81-104, edited.

Note: When the Pillar of Fire appeared and its reflection drew the church ages on the wall of the sanctuary in Branham Tabernacle, the tape recorder was still recording. If you listen to this message, notice that the entire sermon is a perfect recording until the Pillar of Fire appears. Then there are short, intermittent blank spots. The presence of that supernatural fire in close proximity to a magnetic tape recording machine is a likely cause for these skips. However, enough remains to tell what is happening. Gladys Dauch is the woman you can hear scream. I learned this from Jeff Jenkins, who was the pastor of Gladys Dauch for many years before she died. Mrs. Dauch was among those people who saw the light draw the church ages on the wall of the sanctuary. She described what it was like to her pastor. Jeff Jenkins related her description to me. Message sources: 61-0108, 379-388; also the book, *An Exposition of the Seven Church Ages*, 357-359: (Note: Page 358 of the Church Age Book shows the six photographs of the lunar eclipse that appeared in the newspaper during Pope Paul VI’s visit to Israel in 1964.)

Chapter 83: “The Nature of God Explained”

Danny Henry speaks in French (a language he didn’t know) and three French-speaking people agree on the interpretation. Message sources: 61-0211, E28; 61-

0315, E15; 61-0316, E41; 61-0402, 162-167; 61-0411, E68-E70; 61-0429E, E84-E86; 61-1210, 294-310; 63-0623m, 135-137; 65-0124, 2-1 through 2-3; 65-0221m, 6-3 through 7-5; 65-1127b, 8-37; 65-1128E, 13-19. Other sources: John Wildrianne's personal account of his part in this miracle, which he wrote for the Full Gospel Business Men's *Voice* Magazine, March 1961 issue (Vol. IX, No. 2) Note: the wording of this prophecy as I have recorded it is exactly as William Branham quoted it, except that the position of one phrase is inverted. I wrote it as it appears in John Wildrianne's testimony because it is slightly more readable in this form. However, there is nothing to say the magazine's editor did not invert this phrase from the original for the same reason. It does not change the meaning.

Wm. Branham addresses the Chicago Ministerial Association and the events leading up to this breakfast meeting. Message sources: 61-0611, 81-88 and 141; 62-0519, E6-E7; 62-1230E, 40-5 through 42-4; 63-0116, 176-188; 63-0127, E90-E92; 63-0320, {284-291}; 63-0630E, 231-237.

Quotation that begins: "I am not 'Jesus Only' and I'm not Trinitarian; I am a Christian." Message source: 61-0425b, 17-3 through 38-1, edited.

The healing of the soldier with a secret comes from Ed Byskal's personal testimony "I Am a Witness."

Chapter 84: "Wilderness Visions Fulfilled"

Wm. Branham sees a vision where he mortally wounds a little snake, and the events surrounding this vision. Message source: 61-0611, 21-44.

Wm. Branham sees a vision where he shoots a grizzly bear and a caribou, and the fulfillment of that vision. Message sources: 61-1001m, 24-72; 62-0127, E6-E11; 62-0401, 18-4 through 19-4; 62-0610m, E18-E33; 62-0725, E84-E85; 62-1007, 84-89; 63-0118, E38-E71; 64-0500, E43-E64; 64-0816, 11-41. Other sources: *Only Believe* magazine, Vol. 3, No. 1, which has a picture of the bear in this vision made into a rug. Also the author's personal interviews with Ed Byskal, and Ed Byskal's testimony on a video called "I Am A Witness." Bud Southwick's personal testimony concerning this event, recorded on the same video. (See bibliography under Bible Believers.)

The Lord speaks to Wm. Branham from three rainbows. Message Sources: 61-0827, 21-36; 61-0903, E10-E11; 64-0719E, 122; 65-0822E, 27.

Quotation that begins: "Jehovah of the Old Testament is Jesus of the New Testament. See? He's the same God, just changing His form." Message source: 64-0614m, 49-58.

Ella Branham dies and Wm. Branham sees a vision of his mother as a bride. Message sources: 62-0127, E9-E11; 63-0118, E72-E87.

Wm. Branham sees a vision of a deadly African snake, the black mamba; and another vision of demon with horns. Message sources: 61-1210, 47-78; 63-0127, E94-E95; 63-0714m, 49-3; 64-0830E, 1175-143. Note: The date of this vision comes from this statement in the sermon "Paradox" in Jeffersonville, "I had a vision about three weeks ago now this coming Tuesday." The original printed sermon (Vol. 15, No. 8) is dated December 24, 1961; but in the Message Software Package this date has been changed to December 10, 1961. I agree with this earlier date because if it had been the day before Christmas, he would have at least mentioned Christmas, and probably preached his entire sermon on a Christmas theme. Therefore I placed the date of this vision three weeks prior to Tuesday, December 12, 1961.

Chapter 85: "His Rifle Explodes"

Wm. Branham sees a vision commanding him to store up spiritual food in a storehouse. Message sources: 62-0311, 42-1 through 44-7; 62-0601, 765-102 through 766-106; 62-1230E, 17-6 through 19-5. Note: In his original account he says he had a dream and later he calls it a vision. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that he was not at first clear on this point.

Quotation that begins: "I am not talking about the Christian Science idea of 'mind over matter.'" Message source: 62-0311, 15-3.

Quotation that begins: "I believe my mission on earth is to forerun the coming Word..." Message source: 62-0318m, 20-1 and then 23-7 through 25-2, edited. Starting at page 23, the quotations I use to summarize the morning sermon are extracted from the next 8 pages.

God created both the egg and the sperm in Mary's womb. Message sources: 62-0211, 79; 62-0624, E48; 62-0706, 39-44; 62-1125m, E79; 63-0121, E54, etc. We are not saved by Jewish or Gentile blood, but by the blood of God. Message sources: 56-0225, E19; 61-0119A, E58; 61-0210, E50; 63-0317E, {135}; 64-0404, E17; 64-0417, E35; 65-0429b, 77.

The original version of Wm. Branham's essay is found in "The Spoken Word is the Original Seed." A polished version is found in *An Exposition of the Seven Church Ages*. These two versions differ in construction, but not in basic content. I blended elements of both into the version I have presented here. Because of length considerations, I only included the first 8 paragraphs of the 27 paragraphs found in the Church Age Book version. Message sources: 62-0318E, 119-4 through 120-5 and *An Exposition of the Seven Church Ages*, 171-1 through 172-4.

Quotation that begins: "Christ is now taking Himself a Bride..." Message source: 62-0318E, 97-5 through 98-1, edited.

Wm. Branham has a rifle blow up in his face. Message sources: 62-0506, 1-9; 62-0513m, 3-1 through 4-1; 62-0513E, 86-89; 62-0518, E20-E24; 62-0607, E4-E6; 62-0609E, E38-E39; 62-0611, E6-E7; 62-0620, E13-E14; 62-0622b, E40-E43; 62-0628, E17-E20; 62-0704, 5-10; 62-0711, E26-E28; 62-0719b, E37-E38; 63-0113m, E25-E29. Also I consulted with a gun expert, Jay Weber, who is also one of my editors.

Quotation that begins: "I'm trusting in Him to someday crown my ministry." Message source: 62-0908, 120 and 126, edited.

Chapter 86: "A Vision of Angels"

A cyst grows on Meda's left ovary. Message sources: 63-1229E, 16-2 through 21-3; 64-0120, 65-136; 64-0500, E89-E101. Other sources: *Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health*, by Miller and Keane, p. 262.

The Internal Revenue Service's tax case against Wm. Branham is resolved. Message sources: 62-1124E, E12-E19; 62-1230m, 1-5 through 6-4; 62-1230E, 16-2; 63-0114, E8-E10; 63-0126, E93; 63-0728, 6-1 through 7-6; 63-1128m, 35-37. Other sources: Roy Roberson's testimony in *Only Believe* magazine, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 14-15; and also the *Only Believe* magazine article on William and Gladys Dauch in Vol. 3, No. 1, p.22.

Vision of the constellation of Angels coming to Wm. Branham in the shape of a pyramid, and the events surrounding this: Message sources: 62-1223, 3-5; 62-1230E, 14-32; 63-0324E, {402-405}; 63-0802, 14-17; 64-0500, E36-E37.

The mighty Angel in Revelation 10 is Christ. Message source: 62-1230E, 45-7.

The list of mysteries is found in The Scofield Reference Bible, Oxford University Press, Inc., note #3 on Matthew 13:11; and also in Wm. Branham's sermon, "Is This the Sign of the End, Sir?" Message source: 62-1230E, 29-32, and 40.

Quotation that begins: "There are people sitting here tonight..." Message source: 62-1230E, 50-51, edited.

Quotation that begins: "Let me say, because I am going west—" Message source: 62-1230E, 28, edited.

Chapter 87: "The King's Sword"

Quotation that begins: "In this atomic age of uncertainty, the Christian needs more than just the experience of joining church." Message source: 63-0127, E28-E30, edited.

Experience in Sabino Canyon where a sword materializes in Wm. Branham's hand. Message sources: 63-0317E, {11-13}; 63-0324E, {276-288}; 64-0500, E38-E39; 65-0424, 13-18; 65-0725E, 130-133; 65-1127B, 51-59. The descriptions of

Sabino Canyon come from the book *Sabino Canyon*, by David Lazaroff, 1993, and also from the author's personal visit to this place.

Seven angels meet him northeast of Tucson. Message sources: 63-0324E, {268-276} and {63-0324E; {402-407} the angels took him into that pyramid); (63-0601, E7-E8, he says the picture of the cloud of angels was taken before he went hunting); 63-0623M, 79-85; 63-0628A, 41-42; 63-0630M, 41; 63-0630E, 6-14; 63-0728, 33-1 through 33-3, and 92-1; 63-0802, 27; 63-1110E, 15-23; 63-1127, 12; (63-1128M, 31-33 rocks the size of buckets fell when that explosion sounded); (64-0112, 62-64, God declared it in the heavens before he did it on earth); 65-0219, 25-3; (65-0410, 35-4 one of the seven angels raises a sword); 65-1126, 252; (65-1127B, 60-92, he gives a detailed account about the day he was hunting, including paragraph 75: "I watched it until that circle went up, and they turned into a mystic light like a fog.") Other sources: *Only Believe* magazine, Vol. 3, No. 2, Roy Roberson's Testimony; Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 5, article "The Road to Sunset" by Rebekah Branham Smith; and also in the same issue, p. 10, Gene Norman's testimony.

Chapter 88: "Breaking the Seals"

Note: Wm. Branham's 10 sermons on the seven seals are transcribed in a 523-page book called *The Revelation of the Seven Seals*. In my summary of these 10 sermons, I basically followed his line of presentation. However, because he did a lot of reviewing every night as he approached a new seal, the information in my summary is a composite of what he taught that week. For example, under the fourth seal I summarized his teaching about the "blood of Christ as bleach for sin." He first used this ink metaphor while preaching "God in Simplicity," but he spoke about the blood of Christ during every sermon in that series.

Quotation that begins: "About thirty years ago I dedicated this piece of ground to Jesus Christ..." Message source: 63-0317m, {3-4}, edited.

Quotation that begins: "Many people miss God by the way He reveals Himself." Message source: 63-0317m, {113-114}, edited.

Quotation that begins: "I want to shock you a little bit." Message source: 63-0317m, {370-371}, edited.

Note on the scrolls: In Revelation 5-8 John does not describe the physical appearance of the scroll and its seven seals. I based my description on scrolls of antiquity, and also on clues I got from Wm. Branham's explanation of the seven seals in 63-0318, {6} and {45}; and 63-0321, {21}. Although I am not certain of the physical appearance of the seals, that is not important or God would have specifically described them to us. It is the meaning of each seal that is important.

Quotation that begins: "Although this Book of Redemption has been probed at through six church ages..." Message source: 63-0317E, {39-42}, edited.

Quotation that begins: “While the ten virgins were sleeping...” Message source: 63-0317E, {262-269}, edited.

The Pillar of Fire appeared to Wm. Branham each day and supernaturally revealed to him the mysteries of the seven seals. Message sources: 63-0318, {35}; 63-0322, {111}; 63-0324M, {36-38.}

Quotation that begins: “That sounds good, but it isn’t the truth.” Message source: 63-0318, {266-271}, edited.

(The supernatural way these seven mysteries were shown Wm. Branham is noted in these paragraphs from *The Revelation of the Seven Seals*, as follows: 63-0318, {35-38}; 63-0319, {11}, {21}; 63-0320, {294}; 63-0322, {5}, {26}); (He saw a vision of the souls under the altar: 63-0322, {215}) (He saw a vision of the third, fourth and fifth coming of Elijah, and the second coming of Moses: 63-0322, {327}).

Quotation that begins: “Oh, God, they can’t miss this.” Message source: 63-0323, {428} edited.

Quotation that begins: “All the host of heaven was silent...” Message source: 63-0324E, {241-245} edited.

Quotation that begins: “There was a reason that God let those seven voices thunder.” Message source: 63-0324E, {394-398} edited.

Quotation that begins: “Notice how the vision, plus the Word...” Message source: 63-0324E, {410} edited.

Chapter 89: “His Last Great Temptation”

Wm. Branham sang while driving back to Arizona. This detail came from Gene Norman’s testimony in *Only Believe* magazine Vol. 5, No.1, p. 15.

His experience in the mountains of Montana where God showed him seven mountain peaks as an everlasting sign. Message sources: 63-0601, E9-E11; 63-0623M, 53-157. Other sources: Roy Roberson’s testimony in *Only Believe* magazine, Vol. 3, No. 2.

Note: Wm. Branham returned to Montana in nicer weather and had his picture taken with these seven peaks in the background. There is a mountain in Montana named Branham Peak, according to the U.S. Geological Survey GNIS database. It is not one of the mountains that God showed Wm. Branham as a sign. However, in 1983 the U.S. States Department of Agriculture designated a certain type of Montana soil as “Branham Soil.”

He looks at the pictures of the mysterious cloud that was published in *Life* magazine. Message sources: 63-0601, E7-E8; 63-0623M, 79-82; 63-0628A, 41-42; 63-0630M, 41; 63-0630E, 6-14; 63-0728, 33 and 92; 63-0802, 27; 63-1110E, 15-23; 63-1127, 12; 63-1128M, 31-32; 64-0112, 62-64; 64-0500, E36-E42; 65-0219, 25; 65-0410, 35; 65-1126, 252; 65-1127B, 60-83 and 89-92. Other sources: Article in

Life magazine: May 17, 1963, p. 112; article in *Only Believe* magazine Vol. 5, No. 1, “The Road to Sunset”, p. 7, and Gene Norman’s testimony, p. 15.

Note: There has been some misunderstanding concerning the photographing of the mysterious cloud over Arizona and the actual time when the seven angels came to Wm. Branham. The pictures of the mysterious cloud that appeared in the May 17, 1963 issue of *Life* magazine were taken on the evening of February 28, 1963. After hearing some of Wm. Branham’s statements about this cloud and about the pictures that were taken of it, many people (myself included) assumed he was hunting on February 28, the angels met him in the morning, and the supernatural cloud was photographed in the evening over the same spot. However, that is not what the facts indicate, nor is it exactly what Wm. Branham said.

During my research into this topic, I contacted Arizona’s Game and Fish Department. Melissa Swain, who is their librarian, sent me a copy of the 1963 Arizona hunting regulations for javelinas. In 1963 the hunting season for javelinas began on Friday, March 1, and ended on Sunday, March 10. Since Wm. Branham said he shot his javelina the day before the angels met him, if we put him out there hunting on the same day the mysterious cloud was photographed, that would mean he was illegally hunting on the 27th and 28th of February. Speaking from my 23 years of researching this man’s life, I can guarantee you he respected the law. As a young man, besides preaching and working full time for the public utility district, he had a part-time job as a game warden. He received no direct pay as a game warden, but was supposed to receive a portion of the fines when he ticketed people for violating the state’s hunting laws. He worked as a game warden for many years, but he never wrote anyone a ticket. When he caught poachers, he explained to them the importance of obeying hunting laws, and then let them go with just a warning. That was the kind of man he was.

However, I don’t just have circumstantial evidence. Wm. Branham actually said he was NOT hunting in the Sunset Peak area on the same day the mysterious cloud was photographed. Three months after the seven angels met him, while speaking at a house meeting in Tucson, he told his audience about the day when he first saw the pictures of the mysterious cloud in *Life* magazine. He said, “...right there was them angels just as plain as they could be, setting right there in that picture. You see? I looked to see when it was, and—was time—same—about day or two before, or, day or two after I was up there. I looked where it was at—northeast of Flagstaff—or Prescott, which is below Flagstaff. Well, that’s just where we was at, (see?) just exactly.” (Sermon: “Come Follow Me,” 63-0601, E-7) This statement tells us that he knew from reading the article in *Life* magazine that the pictures of that mysterious cloud were not taken on the same day the seven angels met him. Speaking impromptu to that audience (two weeks after he read the article in *Life* magazine,) he couldn’t remember if the mysterious cloud was photographed before or after he

was hunting near Sunset Peak, but he knew for sure it was not the same day. At the same time it was clear to him that the mysterious cloud pictured in Life magazine looked exactly like what he saw on the morning of March 8 when the seven angels left him and rose into the sky.

So how did such a misconception concerning these events get started? It was the result of our misunderstanding of other things Wm. Branham said that connected the mysterious cloud over Flagstaff with the seven angels that met him near Sunset Peak. I have listed all of these references before this note, so I'm not going to list them again. But if we look at a representative statement and examine it closely, that should help you understand all the other things Wm. Branham said on this subject.

In his sermon "Standing in the Gap" preached in Jeffersonville, Indiana, on July 23, 1963, he said, "How many saw, 'A mysterious cloud in the sky?' You see the hands. And now the Life magazine picked it up, and I have the—the article here this morning, in the Life magazine, of—to show. Now here it is—the same time I was there. See the pyramid of the cloud? I was standing just below this. And there, see the distinctive angel on the right-hand side? See the pointed wing of it? Just exactly what was said. And here it's in the view of Mexico and different places from where they took the picture." (63-0623M, 82)

This sounds like he is saying he was standing directly below this cloud when it was being photographed. But that can't be what he is saying because the mysterious cloud was photographed at least a hundred miles northwest of Sunset Peak. Is Wm. Branham making something up? No he isn't. The answer is obvious when you compare this statement with the one I quoted previously. Look more closely at what he said in "Come Follow Me." Referring to the pictures of the mysterious cloud in Life magazine, he said, "I looked to see when it was, and—was time—same—about day or two before, or, day or two after I was up there." You see, he is using the term 'same time' in a slightly broader sense than what we originally assumed. He means that it all happened in the span of about a week (as opposed to two events happening months or even years apart.) Notice he does the same thing with the location where the mysterious cloud was photographed. He said, "I looked where it was at—northeast of Flagstaff—or Prescott, which is below Flagstaff. Well, that's just where we was at, (see?) just exactly." Here again he is using location in a broader sense, meaning that it happened in the same area of Arizona where he went hunting (as opposed to the mysterious cloud appearing over, say, Tallahassee, Florida, or Sao Paulo, Brazil, or anywhere else in the world, for that matter. The world is a big place when compared to a 30-mile-long cloud.)

At this point a critic might suggest that somehow Wm. Branham saw this cloud, either in person or in a newspaper article, and then made up a story to match its mysterious nature. That scenario doesn't fit the facts either. First of all, the cloud

wasn't seen from Tucson where Wm. Branham was at when it appeared, nor to my knowledge were there any photographs of it published prior to the ones in Life magazine (which Wm. Branham didn't see until after the May 17th issue was released.) Furthermore, Wm. Branham had a vision of this event three months before it happened, which he announced and described in detail in his sermon, "Is This the Sign of the End, Sirs?" (62-1230E.) After seeing that vision he still was not sure how many angels would come to him, but he knew there would be at least five.

Consider this: for the first time in the history of the world, a cloud-like object was photographed in the stratosphere and published in a national magazine, and that was on February 28, 1963 in the sky above central Arizona. (A more detailed article on this puzzling cloud appeared in the April 19, 1963 issue of Science magazine.) Isn't it interesting that this mysterious cloud (which scientifically can't exist at that altitude) just happened to look like the head of Jesus looking down on our world; and isn't it interesting that it just happened to appear in the same location and at the same time (broadly speaking) that Wm. Branham said seven angels met him. A coincidence? I don't think so.

Next, I want to deal with the fact that Wm. Branham saw the seven angels form the same cloud-like pyramid above him after they commissioned him near Sunset Peak on March 8. In his sermon "Trying To Do God a Service," which he delivered at a ministerial breakfast in Shreveport, Louisiana, on November 27, 1965, he told his audience about the seven angels coming to him while he was hunting 40 miles northeast of Tucson in 1963. When he came to the part of the story where the angels left him, he said, "In there I watched it until that circle went up, started sweeping up, and they turned into—like a mystic light, like a fog. Just exactly the way— How many seen the picture of it that was taken in Houston? [Note: He is referring here to the photograph of the Pillar of Fire that was taken at one of his meetings in Houston, Texas in January of 1950. See Supernatural: Book 3: Chapter 46.] Nearly all. See? Well, that's just the way this was. It turned into the same thing. It kept going higher and higher. I was running and running, trying to find Brother Fred and them. After a while, about a half hour later, I could see him way down, waving his hands; and Brother Gene coming, waving. They knowed something had happened." (65-1127B, 75.)

Now compare the above statement with Gene Norman's testimony of this same event which was recorded at a church in August of 1985. Starting at around 27 minutes into the recording, Gene Norman said, "I had hunted, oh, probably about a half an hour, and that blast went off, and it sounded like it was right above my head. And I looked up and I didn't see nothing—uh—I seen something—I didn't see the cloud in the form it shows in the picture. When I looked up I seen two long streaks of—like a plane, you know, leaving a trail. Two streaks with a great—miles one way and miles the other way, with a big space in between it. But I couldn't see no

planes. I thought what it was that probably a plane busted the sound barrier, but there were no planes in the area. There just wasn't any there, you know. And I didn't know what it was. And first thing when I got on top, the first thing Brother Branham asked me was, 'Gene, did you hear that noise?' I said, 'I've been here many times and never heard anything like that.' But he didn't say anything more about it."

Something probably did break the sound barrier that morning, but it wasn't an airplane. There is no contradiction between these two testimonies. Wm. Branham was looking into that spiritual realm and watching those seven angels forming into a circle of light that looked like the Pillar of Fire. He should be able to recognize the Pillar of Fire. He had seen it thousands of times over the years while praying for people during his faith-healing campaigns. Many times while under the Spirit's anointing, he asked his audience, "Can you see that light hanging over that woman? ...or that man?" (Search for the key words "see that light hanging" in the Message Software Package.) Only rarely did anyone else in the audience see that supernatural light. But occasionally God did allow individuals to see it; and sometimes He graciously allowed His Pillar-of-Fire form to be photographed so everyone could see it, as He did in Houston, Texas in 1950. He also wanted those seven angels to be photographed over Arizona in the spring of 1963, as a perpetual testimony to the fact that Wm. Branham was telling us the truth.

The overall story of the breaking of the seven seals is amazing enough without including the misconception that those seven angels came to Wm. Branham on the same day that the pictures were taken of that mysterious cloud. Seven angels came to Wm. Branham, true enough, but they met him eight days after the mysterious cloud was photographed. That doesn't make this whole story any less miraculous; and as I stated in the text of this biography, it is absolutely scriptural for God to announce a major prophetic event in the heavens before He does it on earth.

You know, something similar to this misunderstanding happened in the first years of the Christian church. During the last few days Jesus lived on earth, Peter wanted to know what would happen to John in the future. Jesus said to Peter, "If I will that he remains until I come, what is that to you? You need to just follow Me." Peter repeated this, so the saying spread among Christians that Jesus said John would not die. But that wasn't exactly what Jesus said, and it certainly wasn't what Jesus meant. John corrected this misconception when he wrote his biography of Jesus approximately fifty years later, and you can read what he said about it in John 21:20-23.

In my biography of Wm. Branham I have put forth a lot of time and effort in my attempt to describe the events of his life accurately, so that his amazing story can rest solidly on facts where corroborating facts are available. (By the way, if you look at the color photograph of the mysterious cloud, the bottom right-hand corner

of the cloud really is pointed, and it really does look like the wing of a giant dove, or else an angel—just like Wm. Branham said.)

Quotation that begins: "Notice how Jesus Christ is wigged with a white angel wig..." Message source: 65-1127B, 92, edited.

Quotation that begins: "I am returning to the field." Message source: 63-0623M, 156-158, edited.

The truth about marriage and divorce came to Wm. Branham while he was driving from Hot Springs, Arkansas, to Jeffersonville, Indiana, on Saturday, June 29, 1963. Message source: 63-0630M, 4-6.

Quotation that begins: "God promised there would be a third exodus in the last days." Message source: 63-0630M, 41, edited.

Quotation that begins: "If there is one thing that I have to do, Jesus Christ died in vain." Message source: 58-0928E, 31-3. Similar statements: 58-0329, E-30; 60-0306, E-14; 62-0119, E-69; 65-1212, 69.

Chapter 90: "Sermons Like Thunder"

Wm. Branham had personal interviews with a series of people where he wrote out their questions and answers before they asked. Message sources: 63-0728, 8-10; 63-0802, 12.

Quotation that begins: "Full obedience to the whole Word of God will entitle you to the Token." Message source: 63-0901M, 45-5, edited.

Quotation that begins: "The message this morning was to me the highlight message of my entire ministry." Message source: 63-0901E, 9-14, edited.

Quotation that begins: "You can't be desperate until God speaks to you." Message source: 63-0901E, 99-100, edited.

Supernatural discernment in Shreveport's Life Tabernacle: Message source: 63-1130E, 204-237, edited.

Chapter 91: "Stopping a Blizzard"

Visits J.C. Penny Store and flashes back to hell. Message source: 63-1110m, 14-18.

The healing of Oscar's mother and the vision of lost ponies. Message source: 64-0614E, 89-95; also the book *Generation: Remembering the Life of a Prophet*, by Angela Smith, pp. 167-168.

He goes hunting in Colorado in the fall of 1963. Message sources: 63-1110E, 76-151; 63-1128m, 39-119.

Wm. Branham's mysterious burden left him. Message source: 63-1110E, 57-59, 149-151.

Quotation that begins: “I saw a vision of both places...” Message source: 63-1110m, 19. Actually this quotation is a condensation of everything he said on pages 19 and 20.

Quotation that begins: “If we only could realize what this Scripture means: *Greater is He that is in you...*” Message source: 63-1110E, 153-156, edited.

Meda is miraculously healed of a cyst. Message sources: 63-1128m, 120-156; 63-1229E, 15-21; 64-0120, 59-136; 64-0500, E89-E101.

Chapter 92: “Earthquake”

Note: Nearly two dozen times after the seven seals were opened, Wm. Branham commented on Billy Graham’s last name. It seemed significant to him that Abraham has seven letters in his name and Graham has only six letters. Although he does not say it in his sermons, Wm. Branham was hoping the listener would notice that Branham has seven letters and ends with H-A-M. He says this directly in an audio letter to Lee Vayle (64-0500).

Wm. Branham is hunting javelina hogs near Sunset Peak when God speaks to him in a whirlwind concerning judgment striking the west coast of America. Message sources: 64-1227, 157-158; 65-0219, 23; 65-0429E, 29-30; 65-0718E, 105-120; 65-0725E, 143-145; 65-1126, 38-60; 65-1204, 191. Other sources: Douglas McHughes’ testimony in *Only Believe* magazine, Vol. 5, No. 1 (June 1992); Roy Roberson’s testimony in *Only Believe* magazine, Vol. 3, No. 2.

Quotation that begins: “Mr. Prosecutor, I could call a thousand witnesses...” Message source: 64-0419, 81-88.

Quotation that begins: “Our experience is not to match some creed...” Message source: 64-1205, E61-E63, edited.

Chapter 93: “Eliezer’s Mission”

Wm. Branham shoots a mountain lion in Arizona. Message source: 65-0217, 29-36.

Carl Williams defends Wm. Branham at a FGBMFI board meeting. Source: Earl Williams testifying about his father in *Generation: Remembering the Life of a Prophet*, by Angela Smith, p. 107.

A Catholic priest hands Wm. Branham a Bible, fulfilling a passage in the book of Isaiah and in the gospel of Luke. Message sources: 65-0124, 65-0125, 65-0219. Other source: *Acts of the Prophet*, by Pearry Green, pp. 31-35.

Information concerning the writing of the book *Exposition of the Seven Church Ages* came from *Only Believe* magazine, Vol. 4, No. 2, Issue 11, pp. 6-10, an article by Rebekah Branham Smith. However, my account of how Lee Vayle began working on the seven-church-ages book differs slightly from the account in *Only*

Believe magazine. I got some of my details from a personal interview with Pearry Green, who was there when this happened.

God speaks to Wm. Branham near Finger Rock. Message source: 65-0221M, 47.

Quotation that begins: “I’m speaking to my group only...” Message source: 65-0221M, 48-49, edited. The description of Finger Rock comes from the author’s personal observations.

Wm. Branham sees a vision of the Bride of Christ on parade. Message source: 65-0429E, 31-32.

Quotation that begins: “Jesus did only what pleased God...” Message source: 65-0429E, 13-4, edited.

Quotation that begins: “Los Angeles, thou city who claims to be the city of the Angels...” Message source: 65-0429E, 35-3 and 37-1, edited.

Wm. Branham didn’t know he was prophesying about the destruction of Los Angeles. Message source: 65-0711, 49; also Earl Williams’ testimony in *Generation: Remembering the Life of a Prophet*, by Angela Smith, p. 108.

The story of Florence Shakarian comes from *Acts of the Prophet*, by Pearry Green, pp. 111 and 119.

Wm. Branham’s second trip to Africa. Message source: 65-0711, 30-41. Other source: The personal testimony of Sidney Jackson as written in *Only Believe* magazine, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 11-15.

Wm. Branham learns how his ministry is similar to the task of Eliezer, Abraham’s servant. Message source: 65-0711, 68-93.

Chapter 94: “The Dove and the Eagle”

Quotation that begins: “Why is it that my message doesn’t circulate amongst the denominations?” Message source: 65-0718E, 131-132, edited.

Quotation that begins: “You heard me preach on the true and false vines many years ago.” Message source: 65-0725M, 52-54, edited.

Quotation that begins: “In using God’s Word, there are three things you must not do.” Message source: 65-0822M, 72-77, edited.

The picture of *Eagle* in the rock can be seen if you scroll to the end of Wm. Branham’s sermons in the Message Search computer program. The unusual font used in the word *Eagle* in the text of this biography is a True Type font called Bradley Hand ITC and it looks very close to the way the word *Eagle* appeared on the rock. Pearry Green and Billy Paul Branham found this rock after Wm. Branham’s death. They took pictures of it and told other people where it was. Unfortunately some thoughtless people chipped out the letters for souvenirs.

Chapter 95: “His Last Days”

Quotation that begins: “If you are standing with God’s Word, then you are standing complete, justified like you never did it in the first place.” Message source: 65-1125, 37-39, edited.

Quotation that begins: “The first thing that sounds is a shout, a message from a messenger, getting the people ready.” Message source: 65-1204, 152-164, edited.

Quotation that begins: “I’m thankful for open doors...” 65-1205, p. 5, paragraph 14, edited.

Quotation that begins: “If we are those attributes of God, we cannot live by creeds or by denominationalism; we must live by the Word.” Message source: 65-1205, 33, edited.

Quotation that begins: “Watch Him. Jesus referred them to the Word of God.” Message source: 65-1206, 269, edited.

Quotation that begins: “You cannot come to God through creeds...” Message source: 65-1207, 287-289, edited.

Quotation that begins: “There are three physical things left for us to do—baptism in water, the Lord’s Supper, and feet-washing.” Message source: 65-1212, 17 and 25, edited.

The story of the Sako Finnbear rifle as an anonymous gift comes from Dawson Riley’s personal testimony.

Details of the car wreck and of Wm. Branham’s death come from Pearry Green’s book, *Acts of the Prophet*, and from an article by Rebekah Branham Smith “From Time to Eternity,” published in the Anniversary Issue of *Only Believe* magazine.

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Acts of the Prophet, by Pearry Green, 1969. Covers the high points of William Branham’s life, along with Pearry Green’s personal experiences with William Branham. 207 pages. Available from Tucson Tabernacle, 2555 North Stone Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85705, USA. www.tucsontabernacle.com

All Things Are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America, by David Harrell, Jr., 1975. Shows how William Branham’s ministry started the boom in other healing/revival ministries in the 1950’s. 304 pages. Available from Indiana University Press, 601 North Morton Street, Bloomington, Indiana 47404, USA.

Believers International. Their magazine, *Only Believe*, features articles about William Branham’s life and ministry, many of them written by his daughter, Rebekah Branham Smith and now available for view online at www.onlybelieve.com. They also publish the book *Generation: Remembering the Life of a Prophet*, by Angela Smith (one of Wm. Branham’s granddaughters.) The book *Generation* is made up of interviews with 39 people who knew Wm. Branham well.

Sermons of William Branham are available from the following:

Bible Believers, 18603-60th Avenue, Surrey, BC V3S-7P4, Canada. You can hear or print sermons via the Internet at www.bibleway.org.

End-Time Message Tabernacle, 9200 - 156 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5R-1Z1, Canada, has several printed sermons.

The Word Publications, P.O. Box 10008, Glendale, Arizona 85318, USA, has a number of printed sermons. Their website is www.thefreeword.com

Voice of God Recordings, Inc., P.O. Box 950, Jeffersonville, Indiana 47131, USA, has Wm. Branham’s sermons in audio and printed formats; and they also have the Message Software Package, which has all of Wm. Branham’s sermons on computer disks. Their website is www.Branham.org.

William Branham, A Man Sent From God, by Gordon Lindsay (in collaboration with William Branham), 1950. Covers William Branham’s life up to 1950, with chapters contributed by Jack Moore, Gordon Lindsay, and Fred Bosworth. 216 pages. Available from The William Branham Evangelistic Association, P.O. Box 325, Jeffersonville, Indiana 47131, USA.

William Branham, A Prophet Visits South Africa, by Julius Stadsklev, 1952.
Detailed account of William Branham's 1951 trip to South Africa. 195 pages.
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