



Brother Branham as a young minister.

The Acts of the Prophet.
Rev. Pearry Green.
Chapter 7.
English.

1937.

To perceive the hand of God in the tragic events of 1937, as these events affected the life of God's prophet, let us return to his infant years and then to the years immediately preceding 1937.

Brother Branham was born on Tuesday, April 6, 1909, and received the first vision that he could remember in 1912 when he was but three years old. On June 16 of that same year, Mr and Mrs Brumback were married, and one year later, on Wednesday, July 16, 1913, their union was blessed with the arrival of a baby

girl - Hope. The child, William Branham, destined to become her future husband, was then only four years old, but already there were many indications that God had his hand upon him. Three years later at the age of seven, he first heard the voice speaking to him from the whirlwind in the midst of the tree.

On Wednesday, March 26, 1919, Meda Broy was born - a girl destined also to be the helpmate to this prophet of God, sharing with him the bitter disappointments, the tragedy, as well as the heights of joy that his unusual and selfless life would have to offer.

Between the years 1929 and 1933, Brother Branham was engaged in a profession that would seem most unlikely for a future minister - prize fighting. He fought and won fourteen professional bouts during this period and then drew his final fight. But as a prelude to a life of service where the knocks would be hard, this experience was invaluable to the building of his character. The call of God was manifested right after this period when he was first converted, then baptized in Christian baptism. How remarkable it was, even at this early stage of his Christian life, that he realized the importance of being baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The missionary Baptist church which he attended baptized, of course, in the titles of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. He could find no place in the Word where anyone had ever baptized in any way other than in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in the early days of the church. In fact, he found that to be baptized in the titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost was to be baptized in no *name* at all. Thus he asked to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and was so baptized. This fundamental revelation remained with him all of his life, becoming a basic part of his teaching, for which thousands are thankful.

It was while attending this church that he met the lovely Hope Brumback. In the universal manner of young people, a group formed of those with like interests. Sister Hope and young Brother Branham became part of this group, later called "The Gang." Old Photographs reveal the warmth and unity of their fellowship. Life smiled upon our Brother Branham as he and Sister Hope were drawn together in the bonds of love. Their tender relationship, and his unique proposal of marriage to Hope make a beautiful story as told by him on his Life Story tapes and in the book *'A man sent from God'* written by Brother Gordon Lindsay in co-operation with Brother Branham.

On June 11, 1933, the Light appeared over the head of Brother Branham on the Ohio River. He was then twenty four years old. The seven major visions were given him. Also, this was the year that he was to step out in faith, on the strength of his belief that God had directed him, and begin the building of a church. What a rich source of merriment for those who saw nothing but folly in this unlikely venture of a destitute, untried, self-styled young preacher who, with only eighty-four cents in his pocket, had set out to invade the world of organized religion. In spite of their proclamations that what he was hearing was "*of the devil,*" and their dour predictions that "*within a year it will be a garage,*" he moved ahead anyway, confident that this was the same voice that had spoken unfailingly to him since his early childhood.

On the morning that he was to lay the cornerstone of the church, God gave him a vision. He was to read 2Timothy 4, where it says, "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine;... do the work of an evangelist.*" He wrote these verses on the flyleaf of his Bible, tore it out, and placed it in the cornerstone along with the mementos that others had added. The verse became a foundation for him, one to which he often referred in the years that were to follow. The world accepted him as an evangelist, but failed to realize that he was a prophet of God, told by God to do the work of an evangelist. He told them, "*You can go back to the day that I laid the cornerstone of this tabernacle and it's written there in the flyleaf of my Bible.*"

He and Sister Hope were married on Friday, June 22, 1934; he a fledgling preacher of twenty five, his beloved bride not quite twenty one. Their life together was complete and happy, though lacking this world's goods.

They had been married but a few years when he first encountered Pentecostal people and the gifts of the Spirit. It was during a trip away from home while attending a Pentecostal gathering, that he first saw the gifts manifested, something entirely new to his Baptist background. He was called upon to preach at this meeting, and although he tried to hide, God would have it no other way, for he was to learn mightily from this contact. His sermon was entitled "*And he Cried*" He told how the rich man lifted up his eyes in Hell - and he cried. The rich man saw there was no churches there - and he cried. The rich man saw there were no Christians there - and he cried. The rich man saw that there was no flowers there - and he cried. Then Brother Branham said - "*and I cried*" The sermon was simple, but made a great impression on the people. Offers were extended to him from visiting preachers to come and preach in faraway places.

During this experience with the Pentecostal people, he was presented with an enigma. It involved the speaking in tongues and interpretation. Two men in the meetings seemed to be used in a wonderful way. One would bring forth a message in tongues and the other would provide the interpretation. Again and again this happened, each time accompanied by a great move of the Spirit on the congregation. Tongues and interpretation are Scriptural, of course, but Brother Branham was soon to find something amiss. After the meeting one of the men approached him, asking whether he, Brother Branham, had the Holy Ghost. Humble as he was, he replied that he didn't know. Then this man asked his stock question as to whether he had spoken in tongues.

"No," said Brother Branham.

"Well," came the reply, "you ain't got 'er then."

The man had made the mistake of calling attention to himself in the presence of a prophet of God, one called from his mother's womb, and endowed with gifts himself, far beyond this fleshly manifestation; for, no sooner had he spoken than Brother Branham saw a vision of the man which revealed his complete carnality. The vision showed the man with both a blond-haired and a dark-haired woman. The man was married to one woman, but was living with and having two children by the other woman. To himself he said that if it was the Holy Ghost this man had, then he didn't want it. Aloud he said nothing.

The second man's life, in contrast, was presented to Brother Branham, through his gift of discernment, as perfectly clean. It was from this little experience that he learned the lesson of the two vines. The same rain that falls on the wheat, falls also on the tares. They both praise the Lord, yet one is wheat and the other but tares for the burning.

In spite of the experience with the false vine, he was greatly impressed with the Pentecostal people. Exuberantly he told his wife about the people he had met, relating to her and others the offers to preach that he had received. But many of those he confided in sought to check his enthusiasm. They soon discouraged him from joining "that Pentecostal trash," as they put it, saying that it was bound to end in failure. By his own admission, listening to those people instead of God was the greatest mistake he had ever made.

On Friday, September 13, 1935, a son was born to Brother Branham and Sister Hope. They named him Billy Paul. Thirteen months later, on Tuesday, October 27, 1936, they were blessed with a daughter, Sharon Rose, whose name was taken from the Rose of Sharon, Christ. The days of joy were numbered now for this young preacher who had not followed everything that God had called him to do.

Storm clouds thickened in the later part of 1936, bringing rain, and more rain. Soon the peaceful Ohio River became a tempestuous torrent, threatening to completely engulf and destroy the town of Jeffersonville. Young Reverend Branham, outdoors-man and experienced river man, set out with his boat to rescue all the families he could from the swelling waters. In his concern for others he became separated from his wife and children for days. They remained separated in the confusion and isolation which resulted after the flood subsided. It

was during this time, while he searched frantically for his family, that the pneumonia that Hope had contracted earlier would worsen and soon end her young life.

At the tabernacle, the flood waters had risen so high that the pews and pulpit had floated to the ceiling. A remarkable event occurred during this flooding, something worthy of note to the entire world. Brother Branham had left his Bible on the pulpit, open to a place he had read the Sunday before. The swirling waters had entered the building and caused the pulpit and pews to be lifted to the ceiling, yet when the waters receded, the pulpit came back down perfectly in the spot it had been sitting; the Bible was still open in the same place, and not one drop of water had touched the Word of God. With the pews it was a different story, for they came down all crossways. As the natural types the spiritual, this was a clear indication that things were right in the pulpit, but wrong in the pews.

On Thursday, July 22, 1937, Brother Branham was called to the hospital where Hope was being cared for. He was met by Doctor Sam Adair, a lifelong friend. The doctor's face was grave. *"If you want to see her alive,"* he said, *"you had better get in there now."* As he entered her room, something about her frail, disease-wracked body told him that she was leaving this life. In his anguish at the thought of losing her, he cried out to her. The lovely black eyes opened for the last time. *"Bill,"* she asked, *"why did you call me back?"* She described to him the beautiful land through which she was being taken by angelic beings. Her concern at that time was only for him. He should marry again. He deserved to have someone to love him. In a last gesture of love, she spoke of a rifle he had wanted, that had meant so much to him. *"When you get home,"* she said, *"look on the top of the cupboard. I've got some money hidden up there where I've saved up my nickles and dimes."*

The money, five or six dollars, was where she had told him it would be. According to her request, he took it, bought the rifle, and it hangs today in his den in Tucson - mute testimony of the love and kindness of a faithful wife and sister in the Lord.

The very night that his wife died, little Sharon Rose was rushed to the hospital, desperately ill. The young preacher was about to be dealt another staggering blow. His wife was even then in the morgue when the news reached him that he had better hurry to his daughter before she died too. At the hospital, he was given the news that his baby had a highly contagious spinal disease. She was in isolation, but he avoided the nurses and came to her through the basement of the building. The child had suffered terribly. Though she seemed to try to wave at him when he spoke to her, the pain was so intense that her little eyes crossed. How he wished that he could trade places with her and spare her this suffering.

Then it was Satan's turn to plague him, asking him what kind of a God he served, with a wife in the morgue and a baby suffering about to die. *"You say you love Him and He loves you,"* said Satan, *"Look what He is doing to you."* This was Brother Branham's greatest trial, but the Word came through, *"The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."* He patted his darling daughter's face, *"Honey,"* he said, *"Daddy will meet you on the other side."*

Saturday came, the day of Sister Hope's funeral. He had no cemetery plot in which to bury his

dear wife. Her parents gave up their plot for her. Burdened, despondent and filled with such despair at the loss of this one he loved so much, his heart suffered from the additional burden of knowing that his daughter hung between life and death in the hospital. Sister Hope's casket was set over the open grave and the minister said the final words; but God showed Brother Branham the ultimate triumph over the grave, for, glancing over at some cedar bushes, he saw her standing there. As he moved up to the graveside, she moved up beside him, slipped her arm in his, and stood there in that other dimension as they watched her casket lowered into the ground.

Little Sharon Rose died the night of her mother's funeral. On Monday they opened Sister Hope's grave and placed the tiny casket of her daughter right on top of her own. He had buried her in her mother's arms.

This was a great time of sorrow and trial for the prophet of God. He even thought of committing suicide. He asked God why He didn't take him, why he was being put through this. But as he was suffering his greatest despair, God gave him a vision of Heaven one night as he fell into a sleep. It seemed that he was there, walking through a beautiful place, when he was approached by a young, very lovely girl who spoke to him. She appeared to be about seventeen or eighteen years old.

He said, *"I don't believe I know you."*

"Daddy," she answered, *"I'm your Sharon Rose."*

"But, you were just a baby!" he exclaimed.

"Don't you remember your teachings on immortality, Daddy?" she asked.

"Yes, I remember," he admitted.

"Daddy, Mother is up there at the home waiting for you," she said. *"I'm going down to the gate to wait for Billy Paul."*

He walked on up the hill to find a home there of such perfection that it was beyond anything he had ever imagined. As he approached, Hope came out to meet him, confirming that this exquisite place was, indeed, their own. Once during their early married life, they had gone in debt to buy a Morris chair from a furniture store on Market Street in Louisville. For a short period of time, the great green chair had graced their living room, made possible by the "dollar down - dollar a pay-day" plan. But even this slight financial burden had proven too much for their budget and he made the decision to let the chair go back. One day he came home from work to find his wife had baked a cherry pie and had prepared what other favorite foods of his that she could afford. She had made him so happy, but then when he walked into the living room, he saw why. They had come that day to take back the chair he had enjoyed so much. Hope had tried to do everything in her power to make it easy on him that day. Now, in the vision, as she led him through this mansion, and as they came into the front room, he was delighted to find that same old green chair. *"Your labors are over now, Bill,"* she said.

"You can sit down and take your rest; this one won't ever be taken away from you."

Billy Paul was only twenty two months old when his mother died. He doesn't remember her; for the next four years Brother Branham was both mother and father to him. Much improvising was necessary, such as, being unable to afford a baby bottle, Brother Branham used a coke bottle with a rubber nipple over it for his infant son. He carried the bottle inside his coat to keep it warm. At night he slept with the bottle under the small of his neck so that it would be readily available when Billy woke up crying in the middle of the night.

During the years prior to her death, especially when the children were born, Sister Hope was aided in her housework and care of the children by a young neighbor girl. After Hope died, it was only natural for this young girl, then eighteen, to continue to care for Billy Paul. What a comfort to Brother Branham, who had suffered such a terrible loss, to know that Billy was being left in the capable and loving care of a trusted, mutual friend, Meda Broy.

Of course the inevitable talk started, involving the young preacher and this girl in a romantic link. Though innocent at the start, the talk soon degenerated into vicious gossip. Finally, Brother Branham took her aside and said, *"Meda, you're a girl... I don't think I could marry again, Meda ... I loved Hope so much. Why don't you just find a boyfriend. Let's us don't see each other. You deserve a good husband."*

Sister Meda, then twenty two, went home that night, disturbed greatly by the gossip, saddened that people had misunderstood their relationship. She asked God for a verse of Scripture to comfort her and, as she opened the Bible, the pages opened to Malachai 4:5, *"Behold, I will send you the prophet Elijah..."*

God also spoke to Brother Branham and said in no uncertain terms, *"You go get that Meda Broy and you marry her on October 23rd."* Thus they were married on that date in 1941, on a Thursday. He was thirty two, she was twenty two. Billy was six years old.

Brother Branham had been saving up his money to take a hunting trip at the time of his wedding. A honeymoon was also in order. Therefore he just combined the two. He took his young wife and his son with him on a hunting trip that was also their honeymoon. During this trip, they almost perished in a snowstorm. He had left his wife and son in a little lean-to cabin and had gone off hunting when a sudden snowstorm blew in. He was lost and separated from them, but God spared him by reminding him of a telephone line that stretched across the mountain range. He just started walking toward where he knew the telephone line to be and was guided down by following the line to the cabin.

In 1946, the memorable year that the Angel appeared to Brother Branham, Sister Meda gave birth to a baby girl. The date was March 21, and the infant was named Rebekah. She was taken in Caesarean birth. Rebekah was but a few weeks old when God called him to leave for a series of meetings. He had received his commission from the Angel to preach and start a revival that would sweep around the world. When he next saw his daughter she was six months old.

At the time of Rebekah's Caesarean birth, the doctor had advised the Branhams that Sister Meda couldn't have any more children. He wasn't too worried about this, since he was then thirty seven years old and perhaps this was to be the extent of his family. But in the summer of 1950, he received some startling news. It was then that the Angel came to him and said, *"Ye shall have a son by your wife, Meda, and you shall call him Joseph."* This was in contradiction of the doctor's expressed medical opinion, but, like Abraham, he "considered not" the doctor's evidence. God had said that he would have a son, by Meda, and his name would be Joseph and that settled it. So he began to tell it. Sure enough, Sister Meda was found to be expecting a child. On Monday, March 19, 1951, she gave birth - again Caesarean - to a fine little girl. They named her Sarah.

The doctors were, of course, amazed, but they conceded that this was only an exception, completely out of the ordinary and, by all means, the last child she could have. People dared to mock. They said such things as that the Angel said *"Josephine,"* not *"Joseph."* Brother Branham stuck to what he knew to be the truth, *"The Angel of the Lord said that I shall have a son, by Meda, and he shall be called Joseph."*

It was late in 1954 that Sister Meda was again found to be with child. Now the carnal prophecies came forth that not only would the child die, but she also would die. One person, in particular, was vehement in prophecies concerning this - and that person died. On May 19, 1955, on Thursday, at the age of forty six, Brother Branham became the very proud father of a baby boy. And he named him Joseph. He said, *"Joseph, you have been a long time getting here!"*

Let this be a lesson to the world. The doctors had all the facts. Twice their examination of Sister Meda had revealed that, by their professional judgment, no more children could be born. But the Angel of God said otherwise. *"Let God be true and every man a liar."*

In 1960 Brother Branham had an experience which he told for the first time on May 15, 1960, on a message entitled *"Rejected King"*. This experience is often referred to as *"Beyond the curtain of time"*. In it Brother Branham was taken (translated) and permitted to see beyond the curtain of time. In his recount, he says that while he was there Hope came to him in a white robe. Instead of calling him *"my dear husband,"* she said, *"my precious brother,"* as she embraced him. Then a strange thing happened, for another lady also embraced him, saying, *"my precious brother."* The two women then hugged each other. Remembering that Hope had been jealous, he marveled exceedingly about this, then realized that this was perfect love. The experience was lacking in the normal human reactions; the evil of this life was gone. But what revealed was an abundance of perfect love. During this exhilarating experience, he was told that he would have to return to this life for a while, but that the time would come when *"all that he loved, and all that loved him"* would come to that place again.

In 1963, while preaching the Sixth Seal he told of a dream which came in response to a question that Sister Meda had asked a few weeks previously. Her question was about how things would be on the other side for them, since she and Sister Hope both loved him, and he loved them both. Who would be his wife? The dream was again of Heaven. He was present at a great roll call - not judgment - just the calling of a roll to receive rewards. Someone, a

recording angel, was calling out the names and each person would come forward. He said it was as if they would call O-r-m-a-n N-e-v-i-l-l-e, and Brother Neville would walk through the people, everyone would greet him, and he would go up to receive his reward.

Brother Branham said he felt for each one, how embarrassed they must have been, walking up like that, when all of a sudden, he heard the voice say, W-i-l-l-i-a-m B-r-a-n-h-a-m. He hadn't thought of it before, but now he would have to walk as they had. He started through the crowd and everyone greeted him, "*God bless you Brother Branham,*" patting him on the back, "*God bless you brother,*" they all said. He greeted each one also, as the path was made for him through their midst. No one was in a hurry - they had eternity to do this. As he approached the great ivory steps, he thought of how he was going to have to walk up them alone, then someone put their arm in his. He looked down and there was Hope. No sooner than that happened, when he felt something strike his other arm; he looked and there was Meda. Then they walked up the steps together.

You ladies, just remember Brother Branham's statement that you serve God by serving your husbands. Just think about it; he didn't say anything about the women's names being called out, but yet they walked up the steps with him. That should make you sisters really love your husbands.

Brother Branham loved Sister Hope - and Sister Meda. He often said that if we loved him, then we should do something for his family. He appreciated Sister Meda. He knew that much of her grey hair came from serving him, from standing between him and the public to give him some peace, some escape from the pressures. He spoke of how she loved him, even though he would often come in from meetings and leave immediately again on a hunting trip as fast as he could change clothes; return from hunting, and leave for meetings, again with just time to pack a suitcase. But he said that there never was a time but that she had everything made ready for him. Never once did she complain. She simply took her place as the wife of God's prophet.

Sister Branham had a God-given responsibility to raise Joseph, as I know she has done, in the fear and admonition of God, and in the depths and greatness of this message.

Brother Branham's loss of Sister Hope was one of the hardest things that he ever faced in his life, but you see, it was the will of God that the son Joseph was to come through Sister Meda.

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