

**Supernatural: The  
Life of William  
Branham**

**Book 6: The Prophet and His  
Revelation**

**1960 – 1965**

**by Owen Jorgensen**

## Acknowledgments:

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*Supernatural: the Life of William Branham* took me 17 years to complete. I was 34 when I started and 51 when I finished. To put that into perspective, my four children were in grade school when I began writing this biography. By the time I finished, three of my children were married and I had nine grandchildren. During the 17 years I worked on this project, my life had its ups and downs. I want to thank everyone who prayed for me during those 17 years.

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*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.*

—II Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV)

## Introduction

William Branham is not the first man in history to say that he talked with an angel; but few men, if any, has shown more proof that his 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 healing through his prayers. Beyond this, his ministry inspired hundreds of men to start faith-healing ministries of their own.

Paradoxically, as 1954 came to an end William Branham was not satisfied. 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. He decided the reason for this failure was because many Christians did not understand the God they were trying to worship. To remedy this problem, Bill felt led to teach more doctrine in his evangelistic campaigns, explaining the fundamentals of the Christian faith. 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 leave the teaching to the pastors, or teachers who had more education. 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 about the past and future of his ministry.

In this vision Bill was fishing on the shore of a lake. The angel told him how to catch the big trophy fish swimming out in deeper water. 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 little fish away. That would attract the attention of the big 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 was an allegory of his ministry. The angel explained that the first pull began in 1946 when Bill discerned sickness by grasping 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 little 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 foreran the first coming of Jesus Christ, so you will 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 people of the world. Quoting the Apostle Paul, Bill declared, “I have not been disobedient to the heavenly vision.”<sup>1</sup> While 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.

As he drove 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 the vision he saw a young man drive a bulldozer recklessly through his yard. Bill asked the man why he was making such a mess of the yard. The young man tried to slap him, but Bill dodged the blow, and struck the man in the stomach with his fist. The angel of the Lord said, “*Bypass this. When you see that stake driven down in your front yard by your gate, then go west.*” Then 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 reigns, the covered wagon changed into his car—a modern station wagon. There the vision ended.

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 26:13–19

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.<sup>2</sup> In the vision he saw a paradise where hundreds of thousands of people surrounded him, all of them shouting “Our precious brother!” Bill was astonished to learn that these young 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 paradise and return to his old home, but God still had a work for him to finish.

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.<sup>3</sup> 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.*”<sup>4</sup>

“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 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 Parallel’s 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

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<sup>2</sup> At the time William 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.

<sup>3</sup> II Corinthians 12:2-4

<sup>4</sup> I Corinthians 2:9 (NKJV)

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 long campaigns in the Pacific Northwest region. He spent ten nights preaching in Klamath Falls, Oregon; four nights in Lakeport, California; then he drove 400 miles north to hold a ten-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 Mercer, 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 is truth 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 he would pray for hundreds of people a night until he felt dizzy and would almost faint from exhaustion. But the second sign 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 January 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 September 1959, during a campaign 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 were 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. The man was not black like an African or an East Indian; his skin was a sooty gray like charcoal, and it was wrinkled like the leathery skin of an alligator. The man lunged at Bill 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 had a knife in one hand. Desperately, he thrust his blade at the dark man's stomach, but his little blade couldn't penetrate that leathery skin. It felt like he was stabbing a turtle's shell. 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 disappear. Somehow—Bill never knew how—the Lord had delivered him.

With his heart still pounding from adrenaline, Bill sat on the edge of his bed and pondered the vision. He believed the man with the sooty, leathery skin represented the United States government's tax case against him, which had now dragged on for nearly five years. Because he was under a federal investigation, it was difficult for him to leave the country. Spiritually speaking, the tax case was choking 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 his feet as walked. As so often happened in his life, he felt something supernatural enter the room before he saw it. A shiver passed up 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.” 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. In the following years Bill read these verses often, believing that they had special meaning for his ministry. But this Sunday was the first time he had ever used them as 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 people 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 stood 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 mat of leaves, he prayed. After half an hour, he lifted his chest with his arms and rolled over so he could sit on the ground with his back against the oak. Around him the woods remained as quiet as a secret. 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. Bill heard that voice again, as clearly as he heard the robins and meadowlarks singing in the trees around him. It was a deep voice, perfect in its resonance. 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 verse 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 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.<sup>5</sup> 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, Eliljah 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.’*”<sup>6</sup> 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.

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 read as he was directed. There, in a hollow of the Appalachian Mountains, the first three chapters of Revelation opened their petals, revealing a magnificent flower garden of beauty and truth.

Returning to Jeffersonville, he scheduled a week of special meetings for early December so he could share what the Lord had showed 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*, Fox's *Book of the 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, he 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...*”<sup>7</sup> 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.*”

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<sup>5</sup> John 1:19–23

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 17:9–13 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> Revelation 1:10

In his first vision, John, the 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 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 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.’<sup>8</sup> 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.’<sup>9</sup> 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.’ (O 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 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.<sup>10</sup> 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:

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|-----------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| 1. Rev. 2:1-7   | Ephesus  | 53 - 170 A.D.  | Paul     |
| 2. Rev. 2:8-11  | Smyrna   | 170 - 312 A.D. | Irenaeus |
| 3. Rev. 2:12-17 | Pergamos | 312 - 606 A.D. | Martin   |
| 4. Rev. 2:18-29 | Thyatira | 606-1520 A.D.  | Columba  |
| 5. Rev. 3:1-6   | Sardis   | 1520-1750 A.D. | Luther   |

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<sup>8</sup> Acts 2:38

<sup>9</sup> Revelation 1:8

<sup>10</sup> The word “Gentile” means “not Jewish”

6. Rev. 3:7-13 Philadelphia 1750-1906 A.D. Wesley  
7. Rev. 3:14-22 Laodicea 1906 - ? A.D. "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.*"<sup>11</sup> 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.*"<sup>12</sup> 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 I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.*"<sup>13</sup>

The first age began about AD 53 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.<sup>14</sup> The name *Ephesus* means "relax and let go." 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.<sup>15</sup> That is why Jesus said to the first church age, "*I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*"<sup>16</sup> He does commend some qualities in them: "*But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.*"<sup>17</sup>

The word *Nicolaitane* 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 Nicolaitanes 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, Isaac and Ishmael. 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 Nicolaitane 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

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<sup>11</sup> Acts 9:15

<sup>12</sup> Acts 13:46-47

<sup>13</sup> Romans 11:13

<sup>14</sup> Acts 19:1-12

<sup>15</sup> Galatians 1:6-24, 2:1-10

<sup>16</sup> Revelation 2:4

<sup>17</sup> Revelation 2:6

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 whose ministry most closely matched Paul's ministry in deed and doctrine 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, (AD 170—312) 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 Nicolaitanes in the first church age had become a well-formed doctrine in the third, or Pergamos age.<sup>18</sup> 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. 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 for the true vine to preserve the teachings of the Apostles. The stage was set for the dark ages.

The Thyatiran church age began around 606 and lasted over 900 years. Historians aptly called this period the Dark Ages, 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.*"<sup>19</sup> 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 1517 when its messenger, a young Catholic 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.*"<sup>20</sup> Luther agreed with Paul, that salvation came through faith in Jesus Christ alone.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, Luther's followers made the same mistake that doomed the Catholic Church: they organized themselves into a system of leadership that

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<sup>18</sup> Acts 2:15

<sup>19</sup> John 12:24 (NKJV)

<sup>20</sup> Ephesians 2:8-9

<sup>21</sup> Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38

excluded the Holy Ghost. Consequently, Jesus said to the age of Sardis, *“I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”*<sup>22</sup> 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.”*<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> Because of Wesley’s systematic approach to Godliness, his followers called themselves Methodists. Eventually they too adopted a variation of the Roman Catholic system of church government, squeezing out the Spirit of God.

The Laodician 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.<sup>25</sup> 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 Spirit could not take them farther on 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”*<sup>26</sup> 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.”*<sup>27</sup>

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.

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.”

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<sup>22</sup> Revelation 3:1 (NKJV)

<sup>23</sup> Revelation 3:8 (NKJV)

<sup>24</sup> John 17:17; I Thessalonians 4:3–4, 5:23; II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2; James 2:17–20

<sup>25</sup> Acts 2:3, 19:6; I Corinthians 12:10

<sup>26</sup> Revelation 3:16–17 (NKJV)

<sup>27</sup> Revelation 3: 20 (NKJV)

“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.”

“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.<sup>28</sup> 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 the 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 Spirit 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.”<sup>29</sup>

“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.”<sup>30</sup>

“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.*’<sup>31</sup> 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 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.

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<sup>28</sup> Luke 3:15; John 1:19–20, 3:28

<sup>29</sup> Luke 1:80

<sup>30</sup> I 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.)

<sup>31</sup> John 3:22–30 (NKJV)

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 clearly 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.

Many people in the congregation, including Gladys Dauch, watched the eclipse 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 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.

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 Assemblies of God Church. On Saturday morning, February 11, 1961, he spoke to several hundred people at a Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship breakfast held at Clifton's Cafeteria in Los Angeles. His message was being video taped 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 7 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 individual Christians and their relationships with Christ. Today Bill took it a step farther, applying it to churches through the ages and their relationships with Christ. As individuals gather into groups and collectively choose whom they will follow, these groups then bear fruit that reflects their ideas.

To illustrate this point, he described a strange 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 asked Mr. Sharrit if every branch would produce oranges next year? Mr. Sharrit said 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. However, when the orange 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, grapefruit 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 Church, 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.<sup>32</sup> 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 grapefruit. 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 the man for his compliment, although it embarrassed him a little, because the book of Revelation had only 22 chapters, and God said nothing should be added or subtracted from it. Danny Henry was wearing a suit coat over a white shirt. He had a bow tie around his neck. His dark hair, square jaw and chiseled face looked handsome enough to make him a movie star. He put one arm over Bill's shoulder and asked, "Can I pray for you, Brother Branham?"

"Certainly, my brother."

Danny prayed only a sentence or two 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 LeDeaux, a Frenchman who worked as a French interpreter at the United Nations building in New York. He said that he too had 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*

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<sup>32</sup> Romans 11:17-24

*decision thou hast made. This in itself is that which will give, and make come to pass, their 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 Businessmen's Fellowship. After his first meeting, he returned to his hotel room about one o'clock in the morning. 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 Chicago FGBMF chapter, 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 mouthful of toast. "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 politely but firmly, 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.”

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 8:59 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.<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup> So the same God that was the Pillar of Fire became flesh through His Son, and dwelt in a body called Jesus Christ. Colossians 2:10 says, ‘*In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*’ I 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.*’ II 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*

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<sup>33</sup> Exodus 19:10–25; Hebrews 12:18–21

<sup>34</sup> Hebrews 9:6–9

*and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel,*’ which means ‘God with us.’<sup>35</sup> 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 place—then His Life comes back upon us. The Bible says that life is in the blood.<sup>36</sup> 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 *zoe*, 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.<sup>37</sup> 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 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 the 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 to you. You got the revelation from My Father who is in heaven. Upon this rock (What rock? –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 titles showing 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 let’s me fellowship with all of you.”

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<sup>35</sup> Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23

<sup>36</sup> Leviticus 17:11; John 6:53

<sup>37</sup> Acts 2:1–4

“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.”

Back in the fall of 1959 William Branham received 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. He suggested Ed Byskal arrange for a short faith-healing campaign in Grand Prairie, Alberta, and a similar 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.

Dawson Creek and Grand Prairie are two small towns situated 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 Grand 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.”

Byskal blushed. “Well, I’m 27 years old.”

Although Ed Byskal was young in his ministry, 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 where Ed Byskal planned to take Bill when the meetings in Grand Prairie and Dawson Creek were over.

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 by 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’s 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.”

He 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 1500 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, Bill and Billy Paul 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 Klunt.”

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 Grand 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 and a shorter, older man with sandy-colored hair. They came in the café. The older man looked around, 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 both parties finished eating, the soldier followed Bill outside. 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 Grand Prairie and Dawson Creek. When he told them about Mrs. Klunt 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 Thomson and I know he’s dying with cancer.”

After listening to Ed Byskal testify for an hour, Southwick asked Bill if he could see a vision that would help his younger brother, who was suffering with epilepsy so badly that he was having three or four seizures every day. Bill explained that he could not make a vision come; God sent them by His sovereign will. Bill did promise Bud that he would pray about it.

The next morning the six men mounted their horses and rode into the wilderness— Bud Southwick and his eighteen-year-old son, Blaine; Ed Byskal, Chris Berg, Bill and Billy Paul. Between them they led a string of 16 packhorses. At first the trail was dry and easy to follow. They rode through valleys thick with Quaking Aspen trees and along mountain slopes covered with Ponderosa Pine and Douglas Fir trees. Although these lower regions were sprinkled with colorful spring flowers, the higher peaks still clung to their winter topping of snow. That is where they were going to hunt—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. 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 horses' 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 slowed and came along side Bud, his horse matching the plodding steps of Bud's horse. The air was sweet with smells that were a mixture of moist dirt, bunchberry bushes, conifer needles and horse sweat. 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 is 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 he had his chance, he wasn't sure how to approach the subjects. 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 go from crossed to straight. 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 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: ‘*And she again bare his brother Abel...*’ 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 human seed. 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.<sup>38</sup> 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 kicking and thrashing. Within minutes he was sitting up talking to her.

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<sup>38</sup> Romans 6:6; II Corinthians 5:16; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:10

Chapter 84  
Wilderness Visions Fulfilled  
1961

Bill returned to Jeffersonville around the first of June, 1961. Usually wilderness adventures refreshed him, but his late spring hunting trip to northern British Columbia had sent him home feeling severely depressed. There were several reasons for this. After he spoke to the Chicago Ministerial Association, a tremendous spirit of humility and love had filled his audience. Seventy ministers from Chicago told Bill they were going to come to Jeffersonville and be re-baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. By now over a month had passed since that day and none of the ministers had come; nor had any of them called to tell him why. He could only assume they had changed their minds.

The Chicago Ministerial Association was just part of his discouragement. Far more troubling were the rumors he was hearing about people who believed he was 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 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 baby serpent lashed out and struck him on the leg.

Quickly he jumped back so he could examine his wound. Exposing his bare leg, 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 Businessmen'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 do it, at least not at this time.

Later that summer, he preached three sermons on Daniel's encounter with the angel Gabriel, which is recorded in 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 this up a week later with, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel," in which he showed how the things that Gabriel told Daniel are still true today, and have a direct bearing on 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. As the darkness thinned to dawn, 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 screamed, "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. 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 father or grandfather; she has a claim on me alone as her husband. And my daughter has no claim on me as 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.<sup>39</sup> 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.”<sup>40</sup>

“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.”

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<sup>39</sup> Strong’s Greek Lexicon describes “*morphe*” as “the form by which a person or thing strikes the vision; an adjustment of external appearance.”

<sup>40</sup> II Kings 6:1-17

In September 1961 Bill 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 nine-foot long silvertip 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," 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 fire and make breakfast. The vision Bill had described four days ago was far from his thoughts.

By 9:00 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 Blain 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 leaning over the carcass of a caribou bull.

Feeling contented, Bill leaned back against a rock outcropping so he could rest and admire the beautiful fall scenery. Below him stretched wide, expansive valleys 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 20 miles away. He’s mine. The Lord gave him to me.”

First they went down to where Ed and Blaine were gutting and skinning Ed’s bull and arranged to have the younger men bring the pack horses along the timberline to a ravine below Bill’s caribou. 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 bull 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.

Bud scratched the stubble 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 the head, which Bill planned to have stuffed and mounted for 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 a hundred and forty 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 silvertip 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 .270 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 mammoth haystack. Its fur was dark brown close to its body, but the ends of the hairs were silvery-white; hence the name silvertip. 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 place 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 pack horses.

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, all four men leaned over to see the results. The tip of the antler reached exactly to the 42-inch mark on the tape.

FOR WILLIAM BRANHAM, this hunting trip was 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. You're hair is white, and you're 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 furiously 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.*”<sup>41</sup>

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 oddly familiar. In a split-second Bill’s perspective changed and now he was the man on the stage leading the congregation in song. 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

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<sup>41</sup> Luke 8:52

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. 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 Bill heard something approaching through the tall grass. He stopped to watch 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 and fast acting that nearly 100 percent of people who are bitten by mambas die, unless they receive antivenin treatment very soon after the bite. Consequently, African natives are deathly afraid of mambas. One time while he was hunting in Africa, a porter cried, "Mamba!" and Bill saw those natives drop their packs and even run into one another in their haste to get away.

In the vision, this mamba glared at him with evil intent, its tongue darting in and out of its mouth. The Christian brother who stopped beside him, 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 looped its tail into a "figure 8" until the tip of its tail wrapped around its own throat and choked itself to death. A puff of blue smoke rose from the rigid carcass, which now looked as harmless as a baked pretzel.

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

"Then Satan, so that I might know, I unbind you." The blue smoke returned; the snake softened and began to unravel. "I bind you back in the name of Jesus Christ." The smoke flew out again and the mamba choked itself back into a crystalline pretzel.

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 noise of children preparing for school. Bill retreated to his den to think about the vision. The mamba obviously represented 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 I 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.<sup>42</sup> 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. 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.*"<sup>43</sup> 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 wrote the vision in the flyleaf of his Scofield Reference 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, 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 the contents of a toilet bowl spiraling down the drain, this demon swirled into a lump 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 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.

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<sup>42</sup> Perhaps he gets this from II Corinthians 5:6-9

<sup>43</sup> Joshua 3:7

Chapter 85  
The Day His Rifle Exploded  
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 Businessmen'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, 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, you're 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 the two men, "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, radishes, cabbages, turnips 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 Businessmen’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 of Arganbright’s canoe meant good. It was all right for him to go anywhere along the shore 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,” preached on March 11, 1962, he pointed out that the first battle ever fought began in heaven when Michael and his angels fought against Lucifer and his angels. Lucifer and his army were 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 five-hour teaching message split into two parts so the 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 part of Genesis chapter one, including verse eleven: *And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herbs and 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. 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 hybrid 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 people die."

"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 do this or you will die." Satan reasoned with her, saying, "You will NOT die; you will become wise." That one word 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 conceive in her womb and bring forth a son, Mary said, "*How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?*" Satan was whispering in her ear, sowing seeds of doubt. Logically speaking, Satan had a good argument. But when the angel said, "*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,*" Mary answered him, "*Be it unto*

*me according to thy word.*”<sup>44</sup> 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.*<sup>45</sup>

Jesus was a spoken eternal Child.<sup>46</sup> Jesus didn’t have to die, but he did die in order to pay the debt. That’s the only way it could be paid. Nobody else could do it, because everyone else was sexually born after the devil’s plan. Like Mary, those people who 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, he felt inspired to write a summary, which he now read in part:

“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

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<sup>44</sup> Luke 1:26–38

<sup>45</sup> Isaiah 7:14

<sup>46</sup> See note in Endnotes and Sources.

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 promised 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.<sup>47</sup> Over the years several different men offered to buy a Weatherby Magnum for him, but he always said no.

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 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

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<sup>47</sup> At this time William Branham was living on a salary of \$400 per month that he received from Branham Tabernacle.

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 and so, contains 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 backpressure.

Bill leveled his rifle, snuggled his eye against the rifle's scope, centered the crosshairs on the bull's eye and squeezed the trigger. BOOM!!! 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 like he was rising in the air. Where was he? What was he doing? For all he knew, he was dead. A few seconds passed before he realized he was still alive, still on the ground, and blood was squirting from somewhere around his right eye. He slapped one hand over his bleeding eye and used his other hand to force his left eye open so he could see what had happened. The rifle was not there. It had literally exploded in his grasp. The barrel had flown forward about 40 yards, the bolt had flown backwards about 40 yards, and the wooden stock and the trigger mechanism had disintegrated into pieces flying every which way. 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 squirting from around his eye.

Banks Wood, who was still down range, had not yet seen the accident. Bill tried to yell, but couldn't, so he waved one arm until he got Banks' attention. Banks ran to him, so excited he was almost useless. Banks guided him to the car, and then flooded the engine with too much gas. Fortunately he soon got the car started and drove Bill home to wash his face and assess the damage. Then Banks took Bill to an eye specialist.

The explosion had indeed sent shrapnel into his head. Fifteen tiny fragments of metal entered his face in a half-moon pattern below his eye. Several larger pieces went into his forehead and his cheekbone. One small fragment even pierced his lip and chipped one of his teeth. His doctor said the metal fragments around his eye could not be safely removed. "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 only thing I can see is that the angel of the Lord must have been sitting with you on that shooting bench, holding his hand between your head and that rifle.”

At first the skin on right side of Bill’s face looked like uncooked 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.” He thought again of what the Lord told him recently, *“Don’t fear to do anything or go anywhere or say anything, for the never-failing presence of Jesus Christ is with you wherever you go.”*

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 church co-operated 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 1950’s, where often dozens of churches had co-operated 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 wear 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 back-sliding 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...

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 II Timothy 4. The Lord had not specified which verses of chapter four, so that day Bill read only verses one through five, and then stopped. From that day until last May, he had always taken II Timothy 4:1-5 as his commission: *Preach the word...reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine...endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.* Bill believed God gave him those five verses to encourage him when he was a young man just starting his ministry. Now, almost 30 years later, his shoulders were stooped and his skin was wrinkled; he had already lost most of his hair on top, and the hair he had left was gray and thinning. He was 53 years old and there was no escaping the inevitable—he was becoming an old man. Last May the Lord revealed to him that the rest of II Timothy 4 now applied to his ministry also: *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 languishing in a prison cell in Rome. He was an old man with no money and few worldly possessions. 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. Paul looked at his situation with spiritual eyes, and he saw the crowning moment of his life approaching.

Bill showed how God often led his servants to this low point before He came to their defense and crowned their ministries. Briefly Bill mentioned Jacob, Joseph, Elijah, Daniel and John the Baptist as examples of this principle. Then he talked about the supreme example, Jesus Christ.

Many people loved Jesus when He was just healing the sick, feeding them 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.*"<sup>48</sup> 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.*"<sup>49</sup> After that day, Jesus never again enjoyed widespread popularity in Israel. A critic might argue that Jesus had lost his power. Even Jesus, while the Romans were crucifying him, cried out: "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*"<sup>50</sup> That was the lowest point of His life, His darkest hour, just before he said in victory, "*It is finished,*" and God crowned His ministry with the glory of a resurrection.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Matthew 11:6; Luke 7:23 (NKJV)

<sup>49</sup> John 6:47-71 (NKJV)

<sup>50</sup> Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34 (NKJV)

<sup>51</sup> John 19:30; John 20

Bill said, "I'm trusting in Him to someday crown my ministry. I don't know what or when it will be. When He's ready, I am. I hope He'll 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'll 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's finished with me. That's where my ministry is at today. I'm not washed up; I'm just washed in the King."

Chapter 86  
Vision of Angels  
October – December 1962

One morning in October, Bill 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 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 was normally. 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 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. When he entered the room, she was sitting behind her sewing machine, adjusted 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 pain in her left side. When she mentioned it to her husband, he took her right hand in his left hand, and through his special gift, told her that the cyst on her left ovary—the one he had first detected in 1949—was now vibrating stronger than before. Since 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, Bill 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 II 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 7 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 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 a 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.*<sup>52</sup> He noted that a pyramid is the only type of building where the

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<sup>52</sup> Psalms 118:22-23; Mathew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17

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 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 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, Paul, Peter, 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 taxes. Jesus said to Peter, “Technically, we are exempt from this obligation. Nevertheless, so that we don’t offend them, go down to the lake 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.”<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup> 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 she opened the letter and touched that prayer cloth, she felt something like lightning pass through her body. Instantly she was 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.

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!

Near the end of December 1962, a woman from his church came to his house for prayer. Tomorrow morning a surgeon in Louisville would operate on Mrs. Steffy, and she was worried about the outcome. 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!”

Before she told him this dream, he saw a vision of the same thing. That always happened when God used him to interpret a dream. 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

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<sup>53</sup> Matthew 17:24-27

<sup>54</sup> The German spelling of Dauch is pronounced Dow.

different, but they all had some common threads. For one thing, all six dreams placed him in the west. Was God speaking to him in a roundabout way, preparing him for something? He couldn't quite weave the threads together into a 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. The 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. Goyme 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 nick-name, "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. 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. Returning from the store, he set the sacks of 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 saw this vision while Billy Paul was driving him home from Waterloo, Iowa, after a faith-healing campaign that his friend Gene Norman had organized. In the vision he questioned that young man 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 said, "*By-pass this. When you see that stake driven down in your front yard by your gate, then go west.*" Next he saw 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. That is where the vision ended.

Finally the colorful threads in those six dreams were forming a pattern he could understand. 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 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 pile of limp muscles. 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 man and his wife, 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 the shadow of a dove fluttering at the far corner of his sight. When he turned to see it, the shadow receded; when he tried to ignore it, the dove returned to tantalize him. Around nine o'clock he locked himself in his bedroom so he could seek the Lord undisturbed. Knelling 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 byproduct 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 during its REM sleep cycle. 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, Bill was talking to his son, Joseph.

Nearby stood a bush filled with tiny birds, each about half-of-an-inch long, about as small as the smallest hummingbirds. These birds were perched on limbs in such a way as to form a pyramid. They all looked scuffed and bedraggled, like they had flown so far they were about worn out. They chirped incessantly as they fluttered from limb to limb. It seemed like they were trying to tell him something, but he couldn’t catch it. 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 the 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 breaking the sound barrier. Looking to the 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 edge 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 screamed aloud, “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.

People talk about feeling the presence of the Lord as though it is a pleasurable experience. They are confusing His presence with His blessings. The actual presence of Almighty God is so awesome, it will terrify a person to the point of paralysis. Isaiah and John the Revelator both stood near that presence, and they felt like they were going to die.<sup>55</sup>

Meda quit trying to get into the 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

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<sup>55</sup> Isaiah 6:1–5; Revelation 1:10–18

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, and 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, dazed and semiconscious. When he came to his senses, he was sitting with his Bible on his lap, the pages opened to Romans chapter nine. 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 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. His book 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 describing his latest vision and trying to convey the effect it had on him, he asked the question: Could his vision be connected with the events described in Revelation 10:1—7. John wrote:

*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: 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, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. 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. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever. . . that there should be time no longer: 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*

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 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 Reference 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.<sup>56</sup>

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 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 name 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 7 seals.<sup>57</sup>

For the rest of this sermon he posed questions relating to Revelation chapter ten. Some day the events in Revelation ten 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 was sent forth*

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<sup>56</sup> Scriptural references listed in Reverend Scofield’s notes, respectively, (1) Matthew 13: 3–50; (2) Romans 11:25, with context; (3) I Corinthians 15:51–52; (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; I Corinthians 2:7; (8) I Timothy 3:16; (9) II Thessalonians 2:7; Matthew 13:33; (10) Revelation 1:20; (11) Revelation 17:5,7.

<sup>57</sup> Note: William Branham does not give Scriptural reference to these additional mysteries in this sermon because he deals with each subject in detail in other sermons. I 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 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.) II 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.

*with a message of the first coming of Christ, so is this the message of His second coming.*' 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's 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 7 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."

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.

He rented both sides of a duplex apartment house at 3908 and 3910 Park Avenue. The four small bedrooms would cramp his family, but he hoped it would only be a temporary arrangement. In the future, if the Lord told him to stay in Tucson permanently, he could get something bigger. Perhaps he could even buy a house near the mountains. Saturday they unpacked. Monday morning, Bill and Meda enrolled their children in school. Rebekah was 16 years old, and half way through her junior year of high school. Sarah was 11 and in the sixth grade. Seven-year-old Joseph was in the second grade. Later that week Billy Paul arrived with his wife Loyce and their infant son. Billy Paul rented a house that would be his home and his office where he could coordinate his father's campaigns.

On Saturday January 12, 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 1:20-21, 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 gave a man the Holy Spirit, He set 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 sin, 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 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 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 north 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 shown 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 Lemon. The water flowed from one pool to another, going over and around huge boulders, watering a variety of trees—sycamores, cottonwoods, willows, ash and walnuts. At first the creek was on his right side, but in the space of a mile he crossed the creek several times on narrow stone bridges, 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 was a botanical wonderland. Tall, stiff-armed saguaro cactus stood out distinctly on the lower slopes, but smaller varieties like barrel cactus and the prickly pear defended their niches among the rocks. There were desert shrubs also, like mesquite and Palo Verde. 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, he came to some craggy buttes—a grouping of intermediate mountains that stood far below the uppermost cliffs, yet still a long way 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 above his head, but for his purpose, this spot was all the higher he wanted to climb. He noticed a deer standing on a game trail part way down the mountainside. Bill stood motionless and watched as the deer 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. Startled by the 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 it was made of gold and the handle looked like it was made of 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 stainless steel. The cutting edges looked razor-sharp. Bill felt a mixture of attraction and repulsion for that three-foot-long 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, “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. “*The King’s sword!*”

In a flash of sunlight, the sword vanished. Although his 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 far to travel. Well rested, he looked forward to hunting Javelinas, before driving back to Jeffersonville.

The javelina hog (or peccary) is the American equivalent of the European pig; and yet it is different from domesticated pigs—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, 1965, Bill and Billy Paul drove to Houston, Texas. Monday morning Bill had his moment in court.<sup>58</sup> 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 dirt road until they came to the mountainous country surrounding the little communities of Bonita and Sunset, Arizona. 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. On Thursday Bill killed his javelina, but his companions returned to camp with their bullets still in their rifles. Now that Bill knew the general area where a herd was moving, he thought he could help Fred and Gene shoot a javelina.

At daybreak on Friday March 8, he sent Fred and Gene hiking one way while he went another, intending to herd the 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 Rattlesnake Mesa made the climate here too cold to support the long-armed saguaro, but other varieties of cactus abounded, like barrel and prickly pear cactus. 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 was about ten miles south of him. Tucson was about 40 miles to the southwest.

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

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<sup>58</sup> Instead of the death penalty, the young man was sentenced to life in prison.

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, and caused sweat to drip from 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 pigs were out of sight, he rose and ran over a ridge, then followed a deer trail to the bottom of the canyon. As he ran, he thought about the best way to move the pigs up the canyon toward his friends.

Boom! A tremendous explosion shook the earth, causing dust to rise and rocks the size of buckets to tumble down the canyon slopes. For an instant, Bill thought someone had shot him. Looking to the west, he saw a pyramid of seven angels approaching him faster than supersonic jets. These angels were powerful beings clothed in white armor, with their wings swept back and their arms stretched forward. They surrounded him before he could exhale, and they seemed to lift him into the air. As earth and sky swirled about him, his senses stretched to the limits of human perception. Three angels hovered on each side of him, positioned so that 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 a brighter white than the rest of the angels, as though he was somehow more notable 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 thrust a sword in Bill's hand and said, "*Return to Jeffersonville, where the seven sealed mysteries in Revelation will be opened.*"

The sword vanished. Swiftly, yet gently, the angels set him back in that canyon on the slopes of Sunset Mountain. Then they joined hands and changed into a fog that formed into a circle of mystic light. As this cloud rose into the sky, it elongated until it looked more like a triangle than a circle.

Bill watched the cloud of angels rise into the sky, forming a ring-like cloud that feathered into a pyramid shape before it evaporated. Gathering his strength, Bill ran up the canyon to find Fred and Gene. He didn't come across the herd of javelinas, but hunting was now far from his thoughts. He asked his friends if they heard the blast. Both of them said they heard it and felt it, and they wondered what it was, because it didn't sound like anything they had heard before. Bill didn't give them an explanation at that time, and both Fred and Gene knew better than to ask for one. Gene did say that a few minutes before he heard the blast, he wept uncontrollably for no apparent reason.

On Saturday the three hunters returned to Tucson without Fred or Gene shooting a javelina. Bill wanted to leave for Indiana on Tuesday morning, March 12, so he only had a few days left to prepare for his trip. He planned to ride with Gene Norman. Several other families wanted to travel with them in a car caravan, namely the Sothmanns, the Simpsons and the Maguires.

### 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 six and eight. Before he preached, he dedicated the newly remodeled building to the Lord. A contractor had extended the north wall by thirty 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. Behind the pulpit hung the same picture that had graced that wall since 1950. It was a copy of the picture taken in Houston, Texas, showing the Pillar of Fire hovering over William Branham's head. The floor of sanctuary was lined with the same theater-style seats (individual, yet connected) that had been there through the 50's. Of course, now there were more seats; and each of them was occupied.

Bill said, "About thirty 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 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."

He used John the Baptist as one example of this principle. Isaiah 40:3-4 prophesied that the man who would forerun the Messiah will be so mighty, he will flatten the mountains, raise the valleys, and improve every path leading to the Christ. Seven hundred years later a bearded man in a camel's hair robe 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.<sup>59</sup> 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

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<sup>59</sup> Malachi 3:1; Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 1:76; 3:4; John 1:23

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? Because they were looking for something flashy, something spectacular that would fit the picture they had imagined from reading the Scriptures—not realizing that God interprets His prophecies by fulfilling them.

After the disciples realized their Master was the 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."<sup>60</sup> 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 bit. The Rapture will be the same way."<sup>61</sup> 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 Between the Church Ages and the Seals

On Sunday evening, March 17, 1963, William Branham preached on the breach between the 7 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 7 church ages in chapters 2 and 3, and the seven sealed mysteries in chapters 6 and 8. Revelation 4 and 5 describe the seminal event in heaven that makes the victory of the Christian church 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 Chapter 4 John sees God sitting on His throne, circled by an emerald-heavy rainbow. As lighting 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 24 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 7 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 7 seals thereof.* [6] *And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts,*

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<sup>60</sup> Matthew 17:10-13; Mark 9: 11-13

<sup>61</sup> I Corinthians 15:51-52; I 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.

*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—a single, long sheet made from either parchment or papyrus. It had writing on both sides. The outside of the scroll contained the symbolism that John saw; the symbols he described in Revelation 6 and 8. The inside of the scroll contained the explanation of those symbols, that is, the revelation of the mystery. The scroll was rolled up starting at the bottom. Consequently, the 7<sup>th</sup> mystery, written at the bottom of the scroll, was rolled up first. As the roll of the scroll hid the 7<sup>th</sup> mystery, it was sealed closed with a drop of hot wax. Pressed into the wax was a ribbon place-marker that either protruded from the side or else followed the roll of the scroll to the top of the sheet. This process was repeated for each mystery, making seven seals to the book. This book in God’s hand was sealed by His Spirit. More precisely, each mystery was sealed by a different aspect of His 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 of her redemption.<sup>62</sup>

Bill taught that the scroll 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, 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.*<sup>63</sup>

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 7 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.

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 7 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 David, 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 Luther, or Wesley. Certainly there were heavenly beings (like angels and seraphims) who had not sinned. But the

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<sup>62</sup> Ephesians 1: 13-14; 4:30; Romans 8:22-23

<sup>63</sup> Genesis 2:17

law of God stated that any redeemer had to be a near kinsman to the one who was enslaved.<sup>64</sup> It looked like God would not find a man wealthy enough and good 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 24 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 blood dropped from His face.<sup>65</sup> 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 7 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 member of the bride of Christ receives the seal of God, there will no longer be a need for a mediator. Christ will take His bride to the marriage supper of the Lamb.<sup>66</sup> Then He will return to this earth as a judge. The mercy seat will become a judgment seat.<sup>67</sup>

John watched as the Lamb took the book out of the right hand of the Person Who sat on the 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 swear 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

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<sup>64</sup> Leviticus 25, especially versus 47-49; Ruth 3 and 4

<sup>65</sup> Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:40-46

<sup>66</sup> Revelation 19:7-9

<sup>67</sup> Exodus 25:18,22; Leviticus 16:2; I Kings 8:6-7; Hebrews 9:3-5. See endnotes.

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.<sup>68</sup> He promised us that in the days of the seventh angel—that is, in the days 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.

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 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.”

“Now remember, this seventh angel is on earth at the time of this coming, just as John the Baptist was giving his message at the same time the Messiah came. John knew he would see Christ, because he was going to introduce Him. The Scriptures tell us (over in Malachi 4) there will be a man like John the Baptist (a man with the spirit of Elijah, to whom the Word of God came), and he is to reveal by the Holy Spirit all the mysteries of God, and restore the faith of the children back to the faith of the apostolic fathers—restore back all these mysteries that’s been probed at through these denominational years. Now, that is what the Word said. I’m just responsible for saying what it said.”

At the end of this sermon Bill mentioned the parable Jesus taught about ten virgins who went out to meet the Bridegroom.<sup>69</sup> 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 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 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. 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

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<sup>68</sup> Hebrews 6:13–20

<sup>69</sup> Matthew 25:1–13

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?*<sup>70</sup>

### The First Mystery—Revelation 6: 1-2

Having explained the background of the heavenly throne room, William Branham was ready to approach the mysteries of these 7 seals. 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 the two verses again. What does it mean? He knew what some people said it meant. Recently he had read three books about Revelation, written by distinguished theologians. All three authors agreed on the meaning of the white horse and its rider. A horse, they said, is a beast. 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 Light alarmed him, as it always did. He never got used to it. As he stared 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 the people. After reviewing the breach, he plunged in to 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

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<sup>70</sup> I Corinthians 6:2

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.

“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 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 false spirit would look so much like the Holy Spirit that everyone would be deceived by its masquerade except the elect.<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup> 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 his new religion, Constantine organized the Roman Catholic Church. In 325 A.D. he called for a council to be held at Nicea, France, where the doctrines of his new church were agreed upon by the vote of the majority of bishops, with Constantine having the final say on each issue. They agreed to believe in 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.<sup>73</sup> 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 ruler of the Roman Catholic empire, then Satan had a way to receive a crown. The antichrist spirit entered the

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<sup>71</sup> Matthew 24:24; Acts 20:29

<sup>72</sup> Revelation 2:6

<sup>73</sup> I John 2:18

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.) 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.<sup>74</sup> 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. Second Thessalonians 2:3-12 says 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 in the 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 Mystery—Revelation 6: 3-4

*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.*

Notice the order of events in these first four sealed mysteries. When the Lamb breaks the seal, one of the four beasts around the Father's throne makes an announcement in heaven. Each seal, once begun, runs 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. 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 their theology. According to Revelation 10:7, the seventh church age messenger

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<sup>74</sup> Daniel 9:26-27

will collect these loose threads of doctrine and explain them to the church. He will also be rejected, bringing on the final judgment.

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.<sup>75</sup> 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 AD, 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—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.<sup>76</sup> Many years later, the pope in Rome instigated a murderous persecution on anyone who was caught reading the writings of Origen.<sup>77</sup> 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 based upon Luke 14:16-23. In this Scripture 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, even if that means using torture.

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

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<sup>75</sup> Matthew 4:8

<sup>76</sup> 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 Schmuckers' *Glorious Reformation*, so it looks like he is quoting Schmucker, but actually he is quoting Hazeltine, who is 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. Orosis, 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.)

<sup>77</sup> In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Origen wrote widely circulated letters exposing the corruption that was creeping into the church.

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 conventicles<sup>78</sup> assuming the name of churches. Besides the condemnation of divine justice, they must expect the heavy penalty which our authority, guided by heavenly 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 resisted their dogma.<sup>79</sup> As the symbols of the second seal show, Satan has the power to take peace from the earth.

The escapades of these false prophets over the centuries will culminate in the beast with seven heads described in Revelation 13. The seven heads represent the seven hills upon which ancient Rome was founded.<sup>80</sup> Revelation 13:18 says: Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

Bill had toured the Vatican City in Rome and saw for himself the famous Triple Crown that for centuries has been worn by popes at their coronations. This crown has three horns, signifying the Pope’s supposed jurisdiction over heaven, earth and hell. On this crown are written the Latin words: Vicarius Filii Dei, which means “Instead of the son of God.” The Catholic Church believes that their pope is the Vicar of Christ on earth; that is, they believe the pope is Christ’s deputy or substitute on earth. The Bible said to *calculate* the number of the beast. If the Latin phrase VICARIUS FILII DEI is viewed as a mathematical problem using Roman numerals, the sum of those Roman numerals equals 666.<sup>81</sup>

$$\begin{array}{r}
 V \quad I \quad C \quad A \quad R \quad I \quad U \quad S \quad \quad F \quad I \quad L \quad I \quad I \quad \quad D \quad E \quad I \quad = \quad ? \\
 V + I + C + I + V \quad + \quad I + L + I + I \quad + \quad D + I = DCLXVI \\
 5 + 1 + 100 + 1 + 5 \quad + \quad 1 + 50 + 1 + 1 \quad + \quad 500 + 1 = 666
 \end{array}$$

Revelation 17 describes the Roman Catholic Church as an ill-famed woman, riding a scarlet colored beast. The inhabitants of the earth became drunk from the wine of her spiritual fornication. This woman also became drunk from drinking the blood of the Christians whom she killed. In Revelation, a woman symbolizes a church. Revelation 17 says this disreputable woman is that great city, settled 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.”<sup>82</sup> The Roman Catholic Church used a physical sword to enforce its rule through the centuries. When Jesus Christ

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<sup>78</sup> Conventicle – a secret or unauthorized meeting, esp. for religious worship.

<sup>79</sup> See Endnotes and Sources

<sup>80</sup> Revelation 17:7-9

<sup>81</sup> Note: In classical lettering the U is written the same way as a V. Examples of this can be seen in the word JUSTICE, which is written as JVSTICE on the walls of many United States Courthouses built in the classical Roman architectural style. The Vatican City in Rome also has many examples of this, such as the name PAULUS carved about the door of one building as PAVLVS.

<sup>82</sup> Matthew 26:52

returns to earth, Revelation 19 says, “He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called ‘The Word of God.’ ... Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.”<sup>83</sup> The Word of God is a spiritual sword that will finally destroy Satan and his dominion on earth. “For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword...”<sup>84</sup>

### The Third Mystery—Revelation 6: 5-6

*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.*

Rising early Wednesday morning, Bill prayed. Before daylight touched his window, the Holy Spirit came into his room and broke the seal guarding the 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 symbolized the Dark Ages. It represented the spiritual repression that dominated the middle church ages.<sup>85</sup> Now that Satan controlled both the church and the state, the Christian church endured a thousand years of spiritual darkness. The common people were not allowed to read the Bible. They learned about God from their priests, who taught Roman Catholic Church dogma in place of the Bible.

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, the dark ages 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, penance, 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.”<sup>86</sup> But the Apostles never said anything that is in that creed. If the apostles had a creed, it was

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<sup>83</sup> Revelation 19:13 and 15.

<sup>84</sup> Hebrews 4:12

<sup>85</sup> Revelation 2: 18-29, Thyatira (606 to 1520 A.D.)

<sup>86</sup> A copy of this creed is given in the endnotes.

the one spoken by Peter on the day of Pentecost, “Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>87</sup> That is what all the apostles preached. They knew Peter had the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Repentance and baptism in Jesus’ name unlocks the door.

As the black horse begins his one-thousand-year ride, it is midnight for the true believer. But a voice comes from the midst of the four beasts that surround the throne. It is the voice of the Lamb, saying, “*See thou hurt not the oil and the wine.*” The oil symbolizes God’s Holy Spirit.<sup>88</sup> 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 Jacobs well.<sup>89</sup> 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 culturally appropriate for her to do so. The book of Acts gives more examples.<sup>90</sup> 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 Mystery—Revelation 6: 7-8

Bill reminded his audience that the Book of Redemption was planned and written before God created the world.<sup>91</sup> 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 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.<sup>92</sup> While His children were waiting for the original Word to come, God gave Israel, a substitute—the animal sacrificial system. The blood of animals only covered sin; it didn’t remove sin or the desire to sin. Nevertheless, Israel grew to like this substitute. When God’s Word came 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 and all. Jesus Christ came to earth for one purpose—redemption.

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<sup>87</sup> Acts 2:38

<sup>88</sup> Leviticus 8:12; Zechariah 4:12; Matthew 14:25

<sup>89</sup> John 4:1-30

<sup>90</sup> Acts 2:1-40; Acts 10:34-48; Acts 19:1-7

<sup>91</sup> Ephesians 1:4; Hebrews 4:3; I Peter 1:18-20; Revelation 13:8; 17:8

<sup>92</sup> Genesis 3:15

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 described this cleansing from sin like a drop of ink falling into a barrel of bleach. The 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 can not sin.’<sup>93</sup> 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.’<sup>94</sup> How could we even start being perfect? Yet Jesus required it. If He required it, He has to make a way for it to happen; and He has—through His own blood.”

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 the mausoleum 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 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. The first living creature had the face of a lion, which showed the influence of Christ 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 second creature had the face of an ox. Since an ox is a beast of burden, it is the perfect spirit to help the true Christians endure the deceptions, persecutions and oppressions of the dark ages. 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

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<sup>93</sup> I John 3:9

<sup>94</sup> Matthew 5:48

was a thinking spirit, smart and calculating. Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, and other reformers used this spirit of man's wisdom to analyze the Bible. The spirit of man's wisdom helped these reformers to throw off Rome's direct control. The fourth creature 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 will restore the original faith at the end time.<sup>95</sup> One man with the spirit of Elijah will receive this revelation from God and disseminate it to everyone who will listen, which will probably be just one-hundredth of one percent of the world's population. 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. 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 7000 people had not bowed their knees to worship the perverted religious system that dominated the land.<sup>96</sup> The end time will be like that.

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.<sup>97</sup> 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 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.<sup>98</sup> 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.”<sup>99</sup> The judgment, fire and destruction are permanent, which makes them eternal, 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 Mystery—Revelation 6:9-10

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.*

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<sup>95</sup> Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 17:11; Revelation 10:7

<sup>96</sup> I Kings 19:9-18

<sup>97</sup> Revelation 18:7

<sup>98</sup> Revelation 19

<sup>99</sup> Hebrews 6:2; Jude 1:7; and II Thessalonians 1:9; respectively.

All the commentaries Bill had ever read on the fifth seal agreed that these people were Christians who had been martyred. That sounded reasonable, given the imagery. Then the Pillar of Fire swept into the room, driving away the reasoning of men. As Bill stared, transfixed by that great 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 he appeared a fifth time, preaching to the Jews during the final tribulation period, only this time he was not standing alone. Bill watched carefully until he realized who was standing with Elijah.

That night in church Bill explained that these people under the altar were not martyred Christians, as so many Bible teachers had supposed. They aren't killed for any connection to Jesus Christ, but for the "Word of God, and the testimony they held." These 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 and the going up of the Gentile bride. Notice, they were given white robes. (The bride of Christ received their white robes the minute they accepted the pardoning grace of their Bridegroom.) Also note how this group asks for revenge, which is an expected response under the law.<sup>100</sup> A Christian would not seek revenge.<sup>101</sup> 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.

When the bride is caught up to the marriage supper, the people who are left on earth will endure horrendous tribulation. During that time, 144,000 true 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.<sup>102</sup> 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.<sup>103</sup> (Later, Bill said he did not know if the two witnesses would be the original Moses and Elijah, or simply two men motivated by the same spirit that moved Moses and Elijah.) During the tribulation period, these two witnesses will preach the same message to the Jews 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.<sup>104</sup> Notice that Joseph's Gentile bride rested in the palace while Joseph revealed himself to his brothers.

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<sup>100</sup> Exodus 21:22-25; Leviticus 24:19-20; Deuteronomy 19:16-21

<sup>101</sup> Matthew 5:38-48

<sup>102</sup> I Kings 17:1; I Kings 18; Exodus 7:19; Exodus 8-11

<sup>103</sup> Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36

<sup>104</sup> Genesis 45:1-15

## The Sixth Mystery—Revelation 6:12-17

All week Bill averaged only 3 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 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 he stayed mostly in his study. 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 not-so-distant future where the earth groaned and shook like a pregnant woman giving birth to a child.<sup>105</sup> When the vision left him, he felt so stunned that he could scarcely breath. 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."<sup>106</sup> I have one consolation: You also said, 'All that the Father has given Me will come.'<sup>107</sup>

At the service that night, Bill explained how the sixth seal unleashes judgment upon a sinful world that had 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 an earthquake. Volcanoes, war and other plagues soon follow. Those people who rejected Christ will try to hide from His wrath. It is too late to repent. The Lamb is no

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<sup>105</sup> Isaiah 13:6-11

<sup>106</sup> John 6:44

<sup>107</sup> John 6:37; John 18:9

longer a mediator between God and man. When mercy is spurned, there remains nothing left except judgment.

Remember, these seven scrolls together make up the entire plan of Redemption. The first four seals show how God used the spirit of the lion-like, ox-like, man-like, and eagle-like creatures to protect the Gentile bride of Christ from every attack of Satan. The blinded Jews of past ages received their redemption under the fifth seal. Under the sixth seal, 144,000 Jews receive their redemption at the end of the final tribulation. But the earth needs redemption also. 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.<sup>108</sup> (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 descended upon Egypt. This happened right before God delivered Israel from her bondage of slavery in Egypt. Moses will again call for darkness in the last days, right before God delivers the Jews from their bondage of blindness.

Remarkably, Jesus spoke of these sealed mysteries in Matthew 24. His disciples had asked him three questions about the future, including what would be the sign of his second coming and the end of the world. Much of what Jesus answered parallels the revelations in these 7 seals. The first seal shows Satan mounting a white horse of deception. In Matthew 24: 4-5, Jesus said, “*Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*” The red horse of the second seal parallels Matthew 24:6—wars, both literal and spiritual. The black horse of the third seal parallels Matthew 24:7—famine (not just a lack of food, but also a famine for the Word of God.<sup>109</sup>) The pale horse of the fourth seal parallels Matthew 24:9-13—*and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.* (Remember, all Scripture has compound meanings, which means they can apply to more than one situation.) The Jewish martyrs under the fifth seal parallels Matthew 24:9 and 21—those Jews who are persecuted and killed, many of them during the holocaust of World War II in what Bill called an “amateur” tribulation. The sixth seal parallels Matthew 24:29-30, which says: *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*

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<sup>108</sup> Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-12

<sup>109</sup> Amos 8:11-12

*in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* At first those 144,000 Jews will struggle with the message of their hour, like Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord.<sup>110</sup> Jeremiah 30:7-9 referred to this end time struggle of the Jews as “Jacob’s trouble.” Daniel also saw a vision of Jacob’s trouble and was told to seal up the mystery so it could be revealed in the last days.<sup>111</sup> When the Jews finally recognize Jesus as their Messiah, then Zechariah 13:6 will be fulfilled: “And they shall say to him, What are these wounds in your hands? And he shall say, I received these wounds in the house of my friends.”

### 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 8 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 turned in through the week. He wanted all the questions to center around the six mysteries that were now open. Most of them did, but some questions probed 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 missed the rapture. Bill answered, “They are martyred in the tribulation and come up for their judgment after the Millennium, because the Bible said that the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years was expired. Then there will be another resurrection. The just and the unjust will be judged by Christ and His bride.”<sup>112</sup>

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. I can’t say for sure. I’m honest with you. I don’t know.”

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

### The Seventh Mystery—Revelation 8:1

Sunday night William Branham read the first verse of Revelation 8:

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<sup>110</sup> Genesis 32:22-32

<sup>111</sup> Daniel 12:1-4

<sup>112</sup> Revelation 20

*And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.*

As the crowd listened in their own anticipatory silence, Bill explained that the seventh seal had no symbols because it must remain a perfect secret. If Satan knew the secret, he could do great damage. He would try to impersonate it and pervert it like he did all the other spiritual gifts, trying to deceive the elect. He can't impersonate the seventh seal because he doesn't know anything about it. When Jesus referred to the seals in Matthew 24, he omitted the seventh seal, saying only that nobody knows the day and hour of his next appearance. Not even the angels of heaven know. Only the Father knows the time precisely. *'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.'*

The opening of the seventh seal is so great that it hushes every living creature in heaven. The angels, cherubim, seraphs, elders and other living creatures of heaven stop what they are doing. Nothing moves for about a half hour. When they see this great mystery unfold, it awes them into silence.

Like a cut and polished diamond, the seventh seal sparkles with the light reflected from its many facets. Some facets end the groaning and struggling of this natural world. The seven trumpets and the seven vials are contained in this seventh seal. Other facets usher in the millennium and host the wedding supper. Still other facets extend all the way to the end of the world, the battle of Armageddon, and the ending of time, as we know it. Revelation 10: 6-7 said that time will run out at the end of the seventh seal. Bill said this seventh seal is like a fireworks rocket that shoots into the sky and explodes into five stars, and then each of those stars explodes into five more stars, and so on, until the sky is lighted with sparkles.

When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, nothing moved in heaven for half an hour. Any activity might give the secret away. A half hour might not be long if you are having a good time, but in the suspense between death and life, it seemed like a millennium.

Bill said, "I'm not prone to be a fanatic, but as certain as I'm standing here on this platform tonight, God revealed to me that the seventh seal comes in a threefold manner. I'm going to speak about one fold of it."

The mystery of the seventh seal, he said, is hidden behind those seven consecutive thunders that John heard in Revelation 10:3. For comparison, he reminded his audience of the vision he saw last December. First he heard an explosion, and then saw a constellation of angels. Just one burst of thunder preceded the seven angels. That is comparable to Revelation 6:1. When the Lamb opened the first seal, only one thunder preceded the opening of all 7 seals. But in Revelation 10, John heard seven thunders booming one right after the other, like they were spelling out something. Certainly, it is the voice of God speaking to His elect. But what is He saying?

At this point Bill reminded his audience of the vision he saw in December of 1955. In that vision he was trying to lace a baby's shoe, but the large shoelace frayed when he tried to push it through the tiny eyelet. The angel of the Lord said to him, "*You can't teach Pentecostal babies supernatural things.*" Then the angel told him how to fish. He told Bill to cast his hook into deep water and give three pulls on the line. First, he should pull gently to attract the small fish, and then he should pull a little harder to scare the small fish away and attract the big fish. His third pull should be strong and fast to make the catch. But in the vision, when Bill tried to do what the angel had said, he pulled too hard on the line the second time, jerking the hook out of the water and getting his fishing line

tangled. Then the angel explained how these three pulls represented his life's work. The first pull was his faith-healing ministry that attracted people through the supernatural sign in his hand. The second pull used visions to discern the diseases and other problems of people. He kept trying to explain to people how it worked, thus causing carnal impersonators to mimic him and spread confusion. The third pull would be different. Then, in the vision, the angel of the Lord took him inside a gigantic tent, or cathedral, and into a mysterious little room. The angel said, "*I will meet you in that room. This is your third pull. It won't be a public show, so don't say anything about it.*"

After reminding his audience of his 1955 vision, Bill told them about his December 1962 vision, when that blast shook his bedroom in Jeffersonville. In that vision he was standing in the West. He saw a pyramid of little birds pass him flying East. They represented his first pull. Then he saw a pyramid of doves fly by in the same direction. They represented his second pull. Then he saw seven mighty angels. When they passed, they picked him up and took him East. Now he knew they represented his third pull.

Back in December, the blast in the vision troubled him. He wondered if it could mean his death. When he asked about it, the Lord gave him Romans 9:30-33 as a confirmation, "*Behold I lay in Zion a cornerstone...*" But that didn't exactly answer his question or ease his mind. So, shortly after he moved to Tucson, he hiked up Sabino Canyon and prayed, asking God about that blast, and the meaning of that constellation of angels. When that pearl-handled sword appeared in his hand, and that voice thundered, "*It is the sword of the King,*" Bill knew the vision of angels was connected with Revelation 10:1-7 and the revealing of mysteries still hidden in God's Word. Paul, the first church age messenger, established the symbol when he wrote: the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.<sup>113</sup> With that feather-sharp blade still glistening in the morning sun, a soft voice inside his mind whispered, "*This is your third pull.*"

Bill explained to his audience, "There are three things that go with this third pull. One of them unfolded yesterday. The second one unfolded today. The third one I heard in an unknown language, so I couldn't interpret it. I looked right straight at it. This is the third pull coming up. That is the reason all heaven was silent."

He explained that the seventh seal is a threefold mystery. The seven thunders in heaven will unfold this mystery right at the coming of Christ. Since all 7 seals together form the complete Book of Redemption, this seventh seal is the grand finale.

Bill said, "There is a great secret hidden beneath this seventh seal. I do not know what it is, but I know it has something to do with those seven thunders uttering close together. I heard them, but I couldn't make out what they said. Then I saw it unfold into something else. When I saw that, I looked for the interpretation that flew across there, but I couldn't make it out. The hour isn't quite ready for it, but it's moving into that cycle. It's coming closer. Remember that I speak to you in the name of the Lord: Be prepared, for you don't know what time something can happen."

Bill added, "There was some reason God let these seven voices thunder. Christ, the Lamb, took the Book in His hand, and He opened that Seventh Seal. But it's a hidden mystery. No one knows what it is; which goes right along with what Jesus said in Matthew 24:36—no one would know the day or hour of His coming. So you see, the two things are connected. That much we understand. The rest of the seals have unfolded, but this one did not completely unfold. I sat in my room and saw this seventh seal unfold to these seven thunders. That is as far as we can go right now."

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<sup>113</sup> Ephesians 6:17; also Hebrews 4:12

He told them about his experience on Sunset Mountain two weeks earlier, how those seven angels came to him in the form of a pyramid—three angels on each slanting side and one at the top. These angels held the 7 seals. They came to interpret the 7 seals to the elect. When they caught Bill up into their midst, he wasn't in the center of them, but rather, he was closer to the inside bottom right corner. The angel that flew nearest to him glowed brighter than the rest. Counting from left to right, this brighter angel would have been the seventh in the formation. Now Bill knew why that angel had somehow meant more to him than the others. It was the seventh angel, the one carrying the seventh seal—the thing that he had wondered about all his life.

Bill said, "Have you noticed the mysterious part of this week? It hasn't been a man; it has been the angels of the Lord. Those angels came right down and vindicated every message. So you know whether it comes from God or not. It was foretold you by a vision, and here it is. Now, I'm hoping and trusting that you people realize that I'm trying to put this grace on Jesus Christ, Who is the Author of all of it."

"My vision," he concluded, "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 these 7 seals is 'Thus saith the Lord.'"

During the time William Branham was preaching on the 7 seals, his brother-in-law, James Flecher 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. Shivering in the biting cold air, 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, 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 and juggling daily responsibilities was like going to a revival meeting at church, and then going home and cleaning the manure out of the barn.

He 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. 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 pick-up 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 waded 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 a thick stubble of 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 order his pancakes when he must have gotten a tickle in his nose. He sneezed a mighty, bellowing “Ker-choo-ee!” without an apology attached.

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 might look in 20 years. Only these 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 55 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.

“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 Christ, so you would forerun His second coming’. John was more than a prophet. He was also the messenger of My covenant.”<sup>114</sup>

His 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 II 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 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.

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<sup>114</sup> Matthew 11:7-11; Luke 7:24-28

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, 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 peaks rise higher than the rest. They represent the first, second and third pull of your ministry. Three is the number of completion and seven is the number of perfection. 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 blended evenly into the gray snow-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.”<sup>115</sup> 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

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

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<sup>115</sup> *Life*, May 17, 1963 (Vol. 54, No. 20)

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 and said, "I guess you noticed that it is in the form of a pyramid." Then Bill read the caption quietly. 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, Bill 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, opened *Life* magazine and studied that picture again. There was no doubt in his mind these were the same angels that met him on March 8<sup>th</sup> while he was hunting javelina hogs northeast of Tucson. He could never forget how they shot from eternity in the blink of an eye, swept him up in their midst, handed him a sword, and told him to return east to preach the mysteries of the book sealed with 7 seals. When they set him back on the ground, they turned into a white mist that sailed into the sky and formed that same pyramid shape he could see in this picture. On March 8<sup>th</sup> they soon evaporated into the otherwise cloudless sky, but their presence remained around him and went with him back to Jeffersonville. The article in *Life* magazine said these pictures were taken on February 28<sup>th</sup>. That in itself was not surprising. God often declares his greatest works in the heavens before he does them on earth.<sup>116</sup> Exactly seven days after these pictures were taken, those same angels met him on Sunset Mountain and again formed that cloud. Still, there was something about this large color picture in *Life* magazine that called to him, something more that he could not quite place. Suddenly that mysterious, yet familiar voice spoke to him from nowhere and everywhere. It said, "*Turn it right.*"

"I thought I was looking at it right," Bill mused. "Maybe that voice means turn it to the right." He rotated the magazine a quarter of a turn clockwise and was startled to see the cloud become a silhouette of the head of Jesus Christ, gazing at the earth. He glanced from *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.

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<sup>116</sup> 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

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 7 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, Bill 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, “...and 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 1000 wives and his peaceful kingdom, typed the reign of Jesus Christ during the final Millennium. Jesus will have thousands of wives (spiritually speaking) who will be the genuine believers from all 7 church ages. Bill's thoughts drifted back to the first marriage in the Garden of Eden, then forward through the Bible until God revealed to him things about marriage and divorce that shocked 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 token, 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 the freedom of the land of Canaan. During that first exodus, Moses (a God-called prophet) was led by the supernatural sign of a pillar of fire, so the people wouldn't mistake who was really leading them. They started their exodus protected by the blood of a lamb painted on their doorposts.<sup>117</sup> 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 and it has never changed. The only place God met someone in the days of ancient Israel was under the sacrificial lamb. The only place He meets someone today is—not in denominations, 'churchianity', or intellectualism—but under the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, where there is life and fellowship for every believer.

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.<sup>118</sup> 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.*"<sup>119</sup> Jesus knew that He came from God and would return to God.<sup>120</sup> 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 taught in the Hebrew Scriptures, he said, "Lord, who are You?" The Pillar of Fire replied, "I am Jesus."<sup>121</sup> The second exodus began. Similar to the first exodus, this second exodus was initiated by the Pillar of Fire. Just as Moses was the primary leader of the first exodus, Saul (Paul the Apostle) was the primary leader of 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 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."

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<sup>117</sup> Exodus 12

<sup>118</sup> Matthew 11:28-30

<sup>119</sup> John 14:6

<sup>120</sup> John 13:3

<sup>121</sup> Acts 9:5; Acts 26:15

Chapter 90  
Sermons Like Thunder  
Summer 1963

True to his word, William Branham delivered his major sermon's in Jeffersonville, where his congregation loved him enough to sit through two, three, and sometimes even four 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, he preached "Indictment." He opened his sermon by reading the 33 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 Person 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 closely at what happened in 33 A.D. 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." (He was referring to the opening of the 7 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 indwell so It can reflect Itself to this age, to prove that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.<sup>122</sup> 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.*"<sup>123</sup>

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.*"<sup>124</sup> How can a Christian woman cut her hair after she learns that the apostle Paul condemned it?<sup>125</sup> 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?<sup>126</sup> 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."<sup>127</sup>

"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.

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<sup>122</sup> Hebrews 13:8

<sup>123</sup> John 14:12

<sup>124</sup> Acts 2:38

<sup>125</sup> I Corinthians 11:5-15

<sup>126</sup> Deuteronomy 22:5

<sup>127</sup> 2 Timothy 3:15

By elevating your creeds, you are crucifying the Word so that it doesn't have the effect it is supposed to have on people."<sup>128</sup>

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."<sup>129</sup> 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.'<sup>130</sup> I pray for those ministers today who are crucifying the Word again by 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.*'"<sup>131</sup> Grant it, Father. I ask it in Jesus' Name."

On July 17, 1963, he 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."

Bill said, "Mainly I was thinking of you and the children. I'm going to serve the Lord wherever I go."

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<sup>128</sup> Mathew 15:1-9

<sup>129</sup> 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.

<sup>130</sup> Luke 23:34

<sup>131</sup> 2Kings 19:11-13; Isaiah 30:21; Jeremiah 7:23; Colossians 2:6

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 with him. These people were not members of his congregation, but 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. Each person was allotted half an hour. When that time was up, Bill tore the top sheet off his tablet and handed it to the surprised person, proving that the answer came from God.

On July 28, 1963, he delivered his personal masterpiece. Like one of the seven thunders uttering its voice, he preached, “Christ is the Mystery of God Revealed.” 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 Jesus Christ:

[15] *Who is the image of the invisible God...* [16] *For by him were all things created...* [17] *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 sometime 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 might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:* [29] *Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

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.*<sup>132</sup> When John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, that fulfilled the Old Testament type where the sacrificial ram must be washed.<sup>133</sup> Jesus said, “*Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*”<sup>134</sup>

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.”<sup>135</sup> God wanted to identify Himself with human beings by revealing Himself in Christ.

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 is to reveal Himself, first in Christ as the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and then to bring that fullness into a people so that He could have the preeminence. (Preeminence 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.<sup>136</sup> 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 like denominations.)

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.”<sup>137</sup>

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.”<sup>138</sup> 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 alone manifests itself in this person. All hell is against this teaching, but it is the truth.

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<sup>132</sup> Exodus 20:14; Matthew 5:27-28

<sup>133</sup> Exodus 29:15-18; Matthew 3:13-15

<sup>134</sup> John 5:39

<sup>135</sup> 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.

<sup>136</sup> Colossians 2:9

<sup>137</sup> Matthew 17:1-4; Mark 9:2-8

<sup>138</sup> Matthew 16:13-18; Mark 8:27-29

What is the new birth?<sup>139</sup> 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 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."*<sup>140</sup>

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 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.<sup>141</sup> 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 rest within you through Jesus Christ being revealed to you by the Holy Ghost. If you have trouble loving him, then pray God to help you, because God loved the sinner."

Then he 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 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 7 seals. He could not suppress or escape it.

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 7 seals, this verse had assumed even greater significance in his thinking.

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<sup>139</sup> John 3:1-21; I Peter 1:23

<sup>140</sup> I Corinthians 12:12-14

<sup>141</sup> I John 3:11, 18, 23-24; I John 4:7, 11-12; II John 1:5

Sunday morning, September 1, he preached “The Token.” Originally, the token referred to the blood of lambs that the ancient Hebrews painted over their doors on the night the death angel passed through Egypt. If a household did not have the token displayed, that household lost their firstborn son. Every household that displayed the token was spared that calamity.<sup>142</sup> The blood of lambs foreshadowed the yearly sacrifices performed in the tabernacle, and later at the temple at Jerusalem. Because an animal does not have a soul, its life could not come into the believer. Therefore, the chemistry of the blood stood as a token that the sins of the worshiper were forgiven. When the Lamb of God sacrificed Himself on Calvary, the chemistry of His blood drained to the ground, but the life that pulsed in His soul came back upon the believer at the day of Pentecost.<sup>143</sup> Today, the token for the believer is the Holy Spirit of God. It is the literal life of Jesus Christ coming back upon the believer, and its presence shows that the blood has been applied by faith and accepted by God. 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. That is my message. Come into Christ.”

Sunday night, in his sermon “Desperation,” he showed Scriptural examples of how desperation will bring God on the scene.<sup>144</sup> The next morning Bill and his family drove west, leaving the humid heat of Indiana’s summer and heading for the dry heat of Arizona’s autumn.

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<sup>142</sup> Exodus 12

<sup>143</sup> John 14:15-27; 15:26-27; 16:7; Acts 2

<sup>144</sup> II Kings 4 and John 11, to list 2 examples

Chapter 91  
Stopping A Storm in Colorado  
Fall 1963

As soon as the Branham family got back to Tucson, Bill enrolled Rebekah, Sarah and Joseph in public school. One afternoon Meda had to go shopping for school clothes and other supplies for her children. Bill drove her to a J.C. Penny department store. 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 to start, but failing. 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 eye-shadow triggered something in his 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 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 had no meetings scheduled for September or October of 1963. The month of October, as always, he reserved for hunting. That year in Colorado, deer hunting season began on Wednesday, October 23, which happened to be his and Meda’s 22<sup>nd</sup> wedding anniversary. Meda was home in Tucson baking cookies while he was spreading a tarp over frosty ground and pitching a tent at his usual campsite 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, Reverend Mann, Reverend Wheeler and Billy Paul. When they finished pitching their tents and unpacking their supplies, they planned the day’s hunt.

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.

That afternoon Bill 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 site 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.

When they got back to camp, everyone was talking about the weather forecast. Radio newscasters were warning listeners about a huge cold front moving down from Canada, bringing with it a lot of snow and wind. They predicted it would arrive in Colorado sometime the next day. All afternoon hunters had been evacuating the higher elevations, up near the permanent winter camp that Bill called the “cowboy camp.” Over fifty pickups and jeeps had driven past Bill’s camp site, 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. Palmer, Wheeler, and both Martins 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 their dads' decisions.)

Bill and Reverend Mann drove 30 miles to the nearest store to buy more groceries, just in case the snow 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 some 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. Just then he felt the first snowflake brush his cheek. 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 black 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. Naturally 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, like a Pillar of Fire. But there was no such 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 Scriptures, he believed it really was his Creator speaking to him. “I won’t doubt You, Lord,” he 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 entire sun showed itself, melting the snow on the ground and sucking the moisture back into the air. The mountainside steamed as the blue sky widened. Autumn burst forth in all her golden glory.

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. Slings 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 steaming 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.” As soon this thought escaped, he realized it 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 quacking aspen and salute my wife, as a memorial to our many happy years of marriage.”

Not far from the saddle stood a grove of aspen trees that reminded Bill of the place where he and Meda had camped on their honeymoon/hunting trip in the Adirondack Mountains twenty-two years earlier. Every October that he hunted here in Colorado, he visited this spot as a way of honoring their 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 looked at his reflection in the circular glass of his 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, “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 7 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 shoulders?”

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 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. Obviously, they saw him. With his red shirt and the bright red bandana around his hat, they couldn’t miss him. And yet they weren’t alarmed by his presence. How could that be? Yesterday the rifle shots of a hundred hunters had echoed up and down these canyons.

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 a little and stretched out 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.<sup>145</sup> 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.*”

His mysterious burden left him, never to return. Over the next four days, all the hunters in his party got their trophies. 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 one eyebrow. “You know, the strangest thing happened around here. Last week the weathermen said we were going to have a blizzard. On Thursday it

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<sup>145</sup> I Samuel 24

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, 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 in Prison Now," and in it, he chose a similar path to the one he had followed when he preached "Sirs, Is This The Time?"—that is, he examined some Scriptures about what someday will be, and speculated on how close we might be to that day.

Jesus said, "*As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.*"<sup>146</sup> While building a ship on dry land, Noah warned people to repent from their evil ways and prepare for a devastating flood that was coming. It sounded so fantastic, his neighbors didn't believe him. When Noah finished his project, he entered the ark with his family and God shut the door. (Remember, the ark is a type of Christ, Who is the only true place of safety in this world.) The Bible says that Noah waited in the ark for seven days before it began to rain.<sup>147</sup> 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.

Jump ahead two thousand years to the days of Jesus. During the hours that the body of Jesus Christ laid in a tomb near Jerusalem, His soul descended into hell and preached to 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.<sup>148</sup>

In one way or another, these events will repeat in the end times, for Jesus promised, "*As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be...*" Bill wondered how much of this prophecy was fulfilled last March when the 7 seals were opened. Again he asked his congregation to consider the events of Revelation 5, where the lamb becomes a lion and takes the book of redemption from the One Who sat upon the throne. Doesn't that mean a change occurred in heaven and on earth? What kind of change? Through most of the 7 church ages, God excused the ignorance of sincere Christians, because so much of the Bible was cloaked in confusion. Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man, presented his blood as a token to cover the sins of genuine believers, regardless of their misconceptions.<sup>149</sup> When the Lamb becomes a Lion, allowance for ignorance will be over.<sup>150</sup> The blood will still be in effect, but it will change position. No longer will good intentions be sufficient. Now the believer must receive and display the token Himself—that is, the complete Word as It is being revealed by the Holy

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<sup>146</sup> Matthew 24:37-38; Luke 17:26-27. Noe is the Greek form of Noah.

<sup>147</sup> Genesis 7:6-10

<sup>148</sup> I Peter 3:18-20

<sup>149</sup> I Timothy 2:5

<sup>150</sup> See the parallel to this in the first church age. Acts 17:23-31; notice verse 30,

Spirit. Remember, the Holy Spirit is the soul of Jesus, the Anointed One of God. Bill defined the soul as the nature of our spirit; likewise the soul of Jesus is the nature of his Spirit. That is why people become new creations when they accept Christ. The nature of their spirits change. Jesus fills them with His Holy Spirit.

John said, “*If we walk in the light, as he is in the light...the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*”<sup>151</sup> The reverse is also true—if you don’t walk in the light God sends for your age, the blood will not cleans your sins, irregardless of how much you profess to have faith. Bill was not talking about a Gospel of works; he was hammering away at the crucial question: Are you born again? If you are, 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 left outside will be in a prison that they chose themselves.

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.”<sup>152</sup> As God is my Judge, I solemnly believe I’ve been in both places. I’m telling you the truth.”

That evening he 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.*”<sup>153</sup> 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, ‘He that is in you *is* greater than he that is in the world.’ 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, he spent the week-end 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 Pilot.<sup>154</sup> His point was this: Don’t be too quick to condemn Pontius Pilot, because every one of us is faced with the same question. That evening he preached “Three 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, it was two hours earlier in Tucson.) 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.

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<sup>151</sup> I John 1:7

<sup>152</sup> I Corinthians 2:9; II Corinthians 12:1-4; Revelation 21 and 22

<sup>153</sup> I John 4:4

<sup>154</sup> Matthew 27:22

Meda did not have encouraging 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. Briefly he prayed for the upcoming campaign, and then he focused his prayer on Meda’s affliction.

“Lord, 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 three times to have our children. I hate to see her go through another operation.”

Bill thought he heard someone say, “*Stand up.*” 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 that protected this picture. He heard that voice again, commanding, “*Stand up.*”

He stood, turned and faced the column of fire that burned in the center of his living room. His chest felt tight, and he gasped to breath in enough oxygen. From the midst of that fire, a voice said, “*Whatever you say, that is the way it will be.*” Then, the fire folded in upon itself until it was gone.

The room was so quiet and still, 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. 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 phone to call 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. “Billy, 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 Businessmen'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 7 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—*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* Jewish scholars debated the meaning of this passage for centuries, but one day a young Jewish girl became pregnant without having a sexual relationship. Nine months later she named her baby boy, Jesus. Regardless of previous theories, Isaiah 7:14 was now interpreted. That was a prophecy fulfilled 2000 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. God had His back to her tent, but He knew her thoughts. He asked Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Is anything too hard for the Lord?"<sup>155</sup> 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 argue with God by disbelieving God's 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

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<sup>155</sup> Genesis 18 and 19

was created on the sixth day.) Abraham has seven letters, which is God's number of completion.<sup>156</sup>

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 (and later in Tampa, Florida) he preached a sermon he called "Paradox." A *paradox* is something so incredible that common sense tells you it can't be true; and 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 a day, so that he could finish an important battle. Samson used the jawbone of a donkey to kill a thousand Philistines. Samson also pulled the gates of a city off of their hinges and carried them up a hill. A boy named David killed a seasoned warrior named Goliath, even though Goliath was more than twice David's size.

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 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

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<sup>156</sup> Although William Branham does not say it in this sermon, he is hoping the listener will notice that Branham has seven letters and ends with H-A-M. Later, he says this in a private letter Lee Vayle.

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: the baptism of the Holy Ghost introduced into the church on the day of Pentecost; death to the old man (his sins and his own ideas) so that the new man can grow in Christ; and finally the rapture of the church (caught up to the wedding supper.) Among these paradoxes, he included his own ministry of visions, discernment, healing, miracles and prophecy.

Because Douglas McHughes was losing his eyesight to an incurable disease, he asked his brother Glenn to drive him to Arizona. 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 Mountain area northeast of Tucson. Most of these men Bill already knew—like Roy Roberson, Banks Wood, Wallace MacAnally, and Roy Borders. A few of these men he met that morning, which included Douglas McHughes, whom he had never met before. 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 a fire 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. The campfire was burning near the base of a large rock that jutted up from the gravel floor of the canyon. Thirty or forty feet behind this rock, 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 the 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 wearing his reading glasses, a rifle lying across his lap. He was using a screwdriver to adjust the sighting scope mounting brackets on the rifle. Suddenly he looked up and said, "Brother McHughes, will you come here for a minute?"

Surprised by this summons, Douglas McHughes clicked off his camera, and walked over to where Bill sat. Bill 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 this moment to blow on his rabbit call. The screeching noise echoed off of the canyon wall behind them. Bill reached into his shirt pocket and pulled out his own rabbit call, 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 business. Billy Paul was removing the tent poles from his tent. Setting down his rifle, Bill picked up a shovel and walked over to the campfire. After spreading one shovel full of dirt on the dying coals, 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 sight 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 5 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 sight. 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 sight 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 of God’s judgment on America. Sometime soon an earthquake is going to strike the west coast. That will just be the beginning of it.”

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 or destroyed thirty blocks of Anchorage’s downtown business district. Mountains shed their ice and snow in massive avalanches. Then came the tsunami—the killer waves. When the ocean floor rose and fell, it sent gigantic waves crashing upon the shore, as well as south into the Pacific Ocean. These waves 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 (in 1964 dollars). To put this amount into perspective, Alaska’s agricultural, manufacturing, and mining industries combined, only grossed 67 million dollars in 1964.

This earthquake happened on the Friday before Easter, a day Christians often refer to as Good Friday. It is ironic (or prophetic) that on a Friday afternoon one thousand and thirty-one years earlier, the King of Kings was crucified. Matthew told us that the hour Jesus died, “...*the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.*”<sup>157</sup> Three days later Jesus conquered death, passing His victory on to his followers (hence the name ‘Good’ Friday.)

All through 1964 William Branham preached repeatedly on two major themes, almost like an obsession. All across North America he taught people Who Jesus was and is, and how they could recognize His presence. Ever since he preached “Christ is the Mystery of God

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<sup>157</sup> Matthew 27:51

Revealed,” his main theme had become the revelation of Jesus Christ—that Jesus was God in flesh, and now He is God in Spirit, present among us. His second theme was this—God always announces a major transition of history through a prophet,<sup>158</sup> and there will be a minority of Christians who will recognize this, and act appropriately. William 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 the moment the church is caught away to her wedding supper, the age of the Gentiles will end, and then Jesus Christ will reveal Himself to the Jews in Israel.

In 1964 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), “Jesus Came and Called” (on the resurrection of Lazarus by the command of Jesus), “Greater Than Solomon” (comparing King Solomon and Jesus), “Testimony on the Sea” (where the disciples of Jesus compared notes on what they had seen and heard) “God Identifying Himself by Characteristics,” “Identified Christ of All Ages,” “Presence of God Unrecognized,” “Who is Jesus?,” “The Mighty God Unveiled,” and “Identified Masterpiece of God.” He sprinkled his second major theme through many of these sermons, but sometimes he emphasized it in sermons with titles like: “Voice of the Sign” and “Scriptural Signs of the Time.”

In “Voice of the Sign” he 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, because that voice delivers the Word of God, and that Word, if believed, brings eternal life to the believer. For one example he used the Jewish Pharisee named Saul of Tarsus. Originally, Saul was against Christ. Saul was traveling to Damascus in order to arrest Christians when he saw a supernatural light in the sky. That 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 said, “Who are you, Lord?” The voice said, “*I am Jesus, who you are persecuting.*” Those words changed Saul’s life, and Saul (the apostle Paul) changed the course of history. Because of that voice, Saul/Paul recognized his day and his message, and so he became the prophetic linchpin for the first church age. Repeatedly Bill emphasized his second theme, that every supernatural sign has a voice behind it. That voice is God’s message for that particular hour of His prophetic time line. Malachi 4:5 and 6 promised that in the last days the original faith would be restored. Over the last nineteen hundred years the church had wandered away from the Bible into many creeds and unscriptural ideas. The message of this hour is: Return to the Word of God.

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 continued to focus on his dual theme, explaining his theme in more detail through sermons like “The Unveiling of God,” and “Recognizing Your Day and It’s Message.”

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 7 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,

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<sup>158</sup> Amos 3:7; Hebrews 1:1-2; Revelation 19:10

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 on 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 and offered sacrifices, seeking God’s favor.<sup>159</sup> 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 He 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 7 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 forty 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. When Michelangelo chiseled the last burr off of his masterpiece, in a fit of inspiration he struck Moses on his thigh and cried “Speak!” A chunk of marble flew from his statue, leaving a flaw. Bill said, “To my way of thinking, that flaw is what makes it a masterpiece.” Using this story as the 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 own inspiration, God struck Adam’s side and removed a rib, which He used to make a bride for his first son. This woman was the flaw in God’s first masterpiece, the flaw that allowed death to enter the world. But wait—it was for a purpose... Four thousand 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.”<sup>160</sup> Shortly thereafter, God struck his masterpiece, allowing Jesus to die on the cross, thus fulfilling the prophecy, “*Surely He hath 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.*”<sup>161</sup> When Jesus rose from the dead, He came back to earth in Spirit form to collect a bride through 7 church

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<sup>159</sup> Leviticus 23:23-25; Numbers 29:1-6

<sup>160</sup> Matthew 17:5

<sup>161</sup> Isaiah 53:4-6 (NKJ)

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 a perfect world, literally like it was in 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, He inspired the Sculptor to smite Him on Calvary. There is the real masterpiece. When Michelangelo struck his statue of Moses, that 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 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.'<sup>162</sup> 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 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.<sup>163</sup> John said this city didn't need any outside light source, because the glory of Jesus Christ was its light.<sup>164</sup> 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 literally be the headstone of the 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*

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<sup>162</sup> Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13

<sup>163</sup> Revelation 21:2

<sup>164</sup> Revelation 21:23

*Zechariah 4:7: ...he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.*

Chapter 93  
Eliezer Delivered the Invitation  
1965

In the fall of 1964 William Branham was able to buy a license to hunt a cougar in Arizona. In January of 1965, he drove to the mountainous region in the northeastern corner of the state. Renting horses, he rode into the mountains and set up a base camp. All the next day he searched the ridges and canyons for signs of a mountain lion. On the morning of the third day he came upon the trail of a cougar, which he tracked throughout the day. He followed that lion through twenty miles of timber. By late afternoon the giant cat had moved into higher country. For a while Bill lost the trail at a place where the canyon branched as it approached the top of a mesa. Bill stopped his horse and studied the rocky bluffs above him. Where the slopes had soil, ponderosa and pinyon pine trees dominated, competing for space with juniper and spruce trees. Dismounting, he looked for tracks in the sand of the dry creek bottom. A shrill scream pierced the afternoon, quickly rising and falling in pitch. The sound echoed down from the left-hand branch of the canyon, telling Bill where the lion had gone. A shiver went down Bill's spine. It wasn't fear. Rather, it was a shiver of recognition that something extraordinary had just happened. He remembered that poem he wrote when he was twelve years old. The last stanza went:

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 line, listening to that mountain lion scream. He didn't think of it as a coincidence, nor as a dream-come-true. It was more like a confirmation that his steps were guided by the Lord ever since he was a child. Before the sun settled below the mesa, Bill shot that lion. (Later he would learn it was the largest cougar ever killed in Arizona.) He skinned it carefully because he wanted to have it stuffed and mounted, so he could put the trophy in his new den.

Recently Bill and Meda 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 a large addition on the west side. Banks Wood came to Tucson to build this addition—a room that would be large enough to hold all of Bill's hunting trophies. This den room would be separate from the house, attached only by a roof over a breeze way. 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 Businessmen's Fellowship International, had scheduled a FGBFI convention in Phoenix, Arizona, for the third week of January, 1965. Carl Williams sat on the board of directors for the FGBFI. Because Williams

lived in Phoenix, he was responsible for organizing this convention, including choosing the speakers. He asked William Branham to address the convention on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, and again on Saturday morning and Sunday night.

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 FGBFI 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. . .*

Sunday morning the FGBFI 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 notes and his new Bible and went downstairs to the convention. After several songs, Carl Williams turned the service over to him. 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 pour out upon the earth.<sup>165</sup> It is the time when God will meter 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 (the born-again Christians from every church age.)

Although the FGBFI 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, 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 lighting bolt, the reason struck him.

On Monday Bill drove back to Phoenix to hear Dr. Reed speak at the FGBFI 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 it with the convention delegates 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 yesterdays 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 and the first part of verse two. Why didn’t He finish the 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. If it is true (as Bill believed and preached it was) that now is “the day when the Son of man is revealed,”<sup>166</sup> then on Sunday night, January 24, 1965, in

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<sup>165</sup> Revelation 7:14; 14:19; 15:7 and all of chapter 16

<sup>166</sup> Luke 17:22-30;

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 and that Bible borrowed from a priest, in order for Bill to see the connection. 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 took some of his thoughts during the planning stage, but after that, he didn't have much to do except answer a few questions occasionally. Banks Wood and Roy Borders handled everything during the construction stage of the project.

Bill was concerned about the progress of his book on the 7 church ages. Ever since he preached on the church ages in December of 1960 and January of 1961, he had wanted to put the church ages into a book. His recorded sermons on the subject spanned 23 hours. In 1962 Ruth Sumner of Tifton, Georgia, transcribed the series from magnetic tape to paper, so that Bill could have a typed, word-for-word manuscript of these ten sermons. Next he needed someone who could organize the manuscript, tidy up his grammar, and work with him on adding any new material that seemed appropriate. In December of 1963 he asked Anna Jeanne Price if she would do it for him. Ann 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, giving her excellent skills as a writer and extensive knowledge of William Branham's faith-healing ministry. However, when she read the unedited manuscript, she thought she could not do justice to the depth of Biblical teaching it contained. Bill was disappointed when she told him this; he had been counting on her help. At that point he didn't know what to do, and was ready to abandon the project. In May of 1964 Anna Jeanne took the initiative and sent the manuscript to Lee Vayle, whom she felt was qualified to ghost-write the book. After reading the unedited manuscript, Lee Vayle called Bill and offered to make it into a book under one condition—that Bill proof-read everything he wrote. Bill agreed. Through the rest of 1964 Lee Vayle sent Bill approximately one completed chapter per month. Now, in January of 1965, the book was almost complete. 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 correct in every detail.

There was one more thing he was thinking about 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 all puddle into the same basic questions. Many Christians seemed confused about divorce—and in their confusion, they were making serious mistakes. The Lord had revealed to him the truth about marriage and divorce back in June of 1963, while he drove from Hot Springs, Arkansas, to Jeffersonville. 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.

There are several ideas on divorce among Christians. One group believes that a man can only be married once, unless his wife dies, in which case he is free to marry again. Another group believes that a man can divorce his wife, or the wife can divorce her husband, if the other spouse has committed adultery. Still other people believe they can divorce for any reason and remarry at their pleasure, with no consequences from God.

Bill believed the marriage vow was more serious than many people realized. It is a type of Jesus Christ and his Bride. The Old Testament foreshadowed this bond in many places. King Solomon (a son of King David and a type of Christ) had a thousand wives—one king, yet many queens, typing Jesus Christ and His church. The king could divorce any wife, but not one of those wives could divorce him. Likewise, God can divorce us if we are unfaithful (as He did with Israel in the days of Jeremiah)<sup>167</sup>, but we cannot divorce Him. This was not an endorsement for polygamy among Christians. Polygamy was not God’s original plan. God created one man, and then he made one woman to be that man’s companion. Eve was not in the original creation and that made her susceptible to the devil’s lie. When Eve accepted that lie, she committed adultery against her husband. As one of the consequences of Eve’s sin, women lost their co-equal status with men (although that co-equal status will be restored at Christ’s return.)

Once a man or a woman takes a marriage vow, they are married until one of them dies.<sup>168</sup> They can get divorced for various reasons and they have not sinned. However, if that woman marries another man, Jesus said she is living in adultery. She would have two husbands, even though she is only living with one. Paul said that adulterers will not inherit the Kingdom of God, so it is a serious offence.<sup>169</sup>

The trickiest questions came from people who were married and divorced when they were sinners, and then they gave their lives to the Lord, met single Christians like themselves, got married and were now living happily together. 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.

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<sup>167</sup> Jeremiah 3:8

<sup>168</sup> Roman 7:1-3; I Corinthians 7:1-16

<sup>169</sup> I Corinthians 6:9-10

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 directly above Finger Rock. 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, Bill heard the angel of the Lord speak to him. Finally, he had an answer to his question on marriage and divorce.

After he climbed down from Finger Rock and was driving home, he stopped for gas at the gas station owned by his friend Welch Evans. The young man who was filling his gas tank, said, “Brother Branham, you were up on that mountain an hour ago, weren’t you.”

“What do you mean, Ronnie? What did you see?”

“I can show you exactly where you were at.” He pointed. “You were up there by Finger Rock. I called mama and together we watched that 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 their classes to watch a fiery looking amber cloud hovering above Finger Rock. They watched it go up in the air and comedown 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. 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 in Your Ears,” (an expanded version of the testimony he gave in Phoenix), “God’s Chosen Place of Worship,” “Marriage and Divorce,” and “Who is This Melchisedec?”

Because the subject was so sensitive, Bill knew he could only preach on marriage and divorce in Jeffersonville, 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 the audience. On Sunday morning, February 21, 1965, he preached “Marriage and Divorce.” Bill took his listeners back to the Garden of Eden, he explained the basis of marriage, and showed how the seeds of divorce were planted by the serpent and watered by Eve. He showed how God gave Moses special permission to allow for divorce among his people.<sup>170</sup> Even though it was not part of God’s perfect will, God allowed it. Paul also dealt with the subject, giving his opinion, which the Lord honored by including it in His eternal Word.<sup>171</sup>

Finally Bill came to his conclusion—the thing God told him that day on Finger Rock. He said, “I’m speaking only to those people who follow me and this message, not to the outside. 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? 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

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<sup>170</sup> Matthew 9:3-9

<sup>171</sup> I Corinthians 7:6, For I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.

teach your children to never do a thing like that. God 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 7 seals, so that this question would not be left dangling.”<sup>172</sup>

In his sermon, “Who is this Melchisedec?” Bill tackled an age old question. Genesis 14 tells how the city of Sodom was ransacked by a king with an unpronounceable name. Lot and his family were carried away as captives. Abraham pursued this king and defeated him in battle, thus rescuing 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.<sup>173</sup> In return, Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec, giving him a tenth of all he had. This story would be mysterious enough; but in Hebrews 7, Paul writes that Melchisedec is the King 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 per se, 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.*”<sup>174</sup> The book of Hebrews shows that the old Levitical priesthood begun by Moses came to an end when Jesus died on the cross as a sacrifice for sin. Now Jesus Christ operates through the priesthood of Melchisedec.<sup>175</sup>

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 use the Word of

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<sup>172</sup> If you have a question concerning marriage and divorce, don’t use this synopsis of his sermon as a basis for any life-changing decision you must make. Prayerfully read the full text of William Branham’s sermon, *Marriage and Divorce*.

<sup>173</sup> 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

<sup>174</sup> John 8:56-58

<sup>175</sup> Hebrews 5-7

God to overcome sin (remember, sin is “not believing God’s Word.”) When a man (or a woman) finally recognizes that the Word of God is the true food which feeds his 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 II 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 called that state a “glorified body.”

In April Bill 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.”*

The air resounded with the steady beat of a marching song, 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 long dresses or skirts. 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. The tempo quickened, driven faster by the rapid pounding of drums. The twang of guitars mixed with the wailing of saxophones into a cacophony without melody or harmony—just a beat. Someone was singing (or yelling) in rhythm to the music, but he couldn’t understand the words.

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 indecently dressed, exposing too much of her breasts and thighs. She literally danced by the reviewing stand, twisting her arms and waist to the music. Other women followed, 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, so that Bill would know exactly who he was looking at. It seemed like each woman looked worse than the one who came before her. All of them had short hair and painted faces. They all dressed in sexy, vulgar clothes and danced in step to that rock-and-roll beat. 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 almost fainted. She was naked—completely naked! Oh, she held a token patch of gray cloth in front of her waist, as if she thought that made her descent. But descent is how descent acts,

and this woman was not acting decently. Her hips swiveled and her limbs shook as she danced by the reviewing stand. She laughed foolishly as she bounced her head in time with the beat.

Bill's spirit sank to the lowest depths of despair. Miss Christianity of America was the filthiest woman 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? 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."

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, 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 after all. My efforts have not been in vain. There will be a bride for Christ in the end time."

Then he noticed 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.

Cupping his hands around his mouth, Bill shouted, "Don't do that, sisters! Don't get out of step!"

The vision left him. When he returned to the natural world, he was standing with his hands raised to his mouth. His heart was still beating rapidly.

On Thursday evening, April 29, 1965, Bill spoke to the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, California. Before his sermon, Florence Shakarian sang a magnificent solo that touched every heart in the room. Florence was the sister of Demos Shakarian, president of the FGBFI. The song was all the more poignant to those who knew that Florence was dying from cancer.

A few months earlier, Demos had asked William Branham to pray for his sister. Demos had helped to sponsor some of Bill's faith-healing campaigns, so he had seen hundreds of miraculous healings. Sometimes he had worked as an usher, collecting the prayer cards from people in the prayer lines as they left the floor to walk up on the platform and receive Bill's prayer. Demos always checked what these people wrote on their prayer cards with the diagnosis Bill gave through his supernatural discernment. Demos never saw a mistake, not even in the slightest details. That is why he was so eager to have Bill pray for his sister. But when Bill asked God about the fate of Florence, God showed him a vision of her lying in a casket. 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.

Now, in this crowded room at the Biltmore Hotel, a man spoke in an unknown tongue, and then another man interpreted: “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 the prophecy, because he remembered what his father had said.

Although the large room was full of people (many who wanted to be there could not get inside), Bill was mindful of a larger audience. A reel-to-reel tape recorder was turning, so he knew this sermon, “Choosing of a Bride,” would go around the world. He took his text from Genesis 24, where Abraham is searching for a bride for his son, Isaac. Abraham wasn’t impressed with the pretty women in the godless tribes of Canaan. 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 the 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 Isaac. This love story is a beautiful type of Christ and His bride. (The same Holy Spirit that the believer waters will carry her to her 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 could give a man; but a bad one, as Solomon said, is water in his blood. A good wife is one who fits him well, who compliments 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 man was not made for woman, but woman was made for man; so Christ was not made for the church, but the church was made for Christ. 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 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.’ The modern church hates that plan, so how could she be Christ’s bride. When Christians today

chose 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."

He 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 compunction 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."

His 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.<sup>176</sup> It will be worse than the last day of Pompeii.<sup>177</sup> Repent, Los Angeles! Repent the rest of you, and turn to God! The hour of His wrath is upon the earth. Flee while there's time to flee and come into Christ!"

Amid much weeping and repenting by the audience, he spoke 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 the 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 no good. Remember, Esau sought to find the place of his birthright and couldn't find it.<sup>178</sup> 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. Afterward, he could not remember what he had said during the last thirty minutes of his sermon. Billy Paul told him how he had prophesied that Los Angeles would someday sink beneath the ocean. Bill asked his son if that was why he looked so glum. Billy Paul reminded his father about the person who interpreted that

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<sup>176</sup> 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.

<sup>177</sup> 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.

<sup>178</sup> Hebrews 12:14-17

unknown tongue, prophesying about Florence Shakarian, saying that she would live to see the coming of the Lord. 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 than the vision I saw of her last month.”<sup>179</sup>

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 he again applied for visas to South Africa and Mozambique. Both visas were approved; however they were restricted visas which would allow him to hunt, but would not allow him to hold any religious meetings. Apparently South Africa 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 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 natives carrying a third native on a stretcher. The vision made it clear that the third native 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.”

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<sup>179</sup> Florence Shakarian died on September 10, 1965 at 2:45 a.m.

“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 lay your hands on him, knowing that smallpox is contagious?”

Jackson smiled. “I would do what the Irishman said he would do—shoot first and argue later.”

“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 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 man on the stretcher in the back of the Land Rover and drove off. Everyone else ate supper and retired 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 near by.’ 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. Jackson 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 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 very 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.’ Jackson followed this native to a room where a young man waited. It was the man they had prayed for while he lay fever-ridden on that woven bark stretcher. Incredibly, this man had tracked the hunters on foot for 150 miles, just so he could thank ‘the master’ for praying for him.’ Sidney Jackson led the man to William Branham.

A few days after he returned from Africa, Bill dreamed he was a young man again, working at his original job at Public Service Company of 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 slipped 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 hard money. 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 he 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 his old company, and in each dream something bad happened. It 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 a 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.<sup>180</sup> But that priesthood has

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<sup>180</sup> Uwriym (Urim)=lights; Tummiym (Thummim)=used with the Urim, for the will of God. Exodus 23:30; Leviticus 8:8; Numbers 27:21; Deuteronomy 33:8; I Samuel 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65.

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, 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 Leads An Eagle  
July – September 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. He knew that Branham Tabernacle could not hold all the people who would come to special meetings, so he postponed the meetings. 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 farmers field, set up the tent and hold special meetings for as long his subject required. Besides, he still thought there might be a literal interpretation to his December 1955 vision of a tent (or cathedral) and that little room on the platform 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 His Will.” He took his text from I Chronicles 13, where King David brought the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem. David placed the ark in an oxcart, 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 I 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 he 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 very close to the truth, yet wrong in one or two 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, 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 three letter word “NOT”, which changed the meaning of God’s commandment. These false anointed ones at the end time will twist the Word of God 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.<sup>181</sup>

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 briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.* 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 Methodist 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 a God Who still performs miracles.

God first taught Bill this lesson when he visited a Pentecostal convention at Mishawaka, Indiana, in 1934. During the convention, he saw two men who spoke in unknown tongues and prophesied. 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 the good and bad seed 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 their

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<sup>181</sup> John 16:12-15

doctrines. Good doctrine lines up with the Bible from the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation. Jesus continued, “*Not every one 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 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’s 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 revelation of Who He is.<sup>182</sup> 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 not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*’<sup>183</sup> 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 II 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.* That 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, so that he would be worshiped as god.<sup>184</sup> 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 he preached “Christ Revealed in His Own Word.” He took his text from I 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

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<sup>182</sup> Matthew 16:15-18

<sup>183</sup> 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.

<sup>184</sup> II Thessalonians 2:3-4

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 person in a 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.*'<sup>185</sup> 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.<sup>186</sup> He was the God/man. We 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 a 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 only applied to the bygone days of the twelve apostles. God's power should not be relegated to ancient history. Jesus 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 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

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<sup>185</sup> Exodus 20:3

<sup>186</sup> Perhaps this statement by William Branham will clarify this important point: He 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's 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 husband and wife is one." QUESTIONS.AND.ANSWERS\_ JEFF.IN COD SUNDAY\_ 64-0830M 1085-110 to 1085-111

(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 5<sup>th</sup> grade and fourteen-year-old Sarah was entering the 9<sup>th</sup> 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, was not sure what God wanted him to do next. His future was basically open. 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 FGBM breakfast in Phoenix; and another meeting the following week at the Grantway Assembly of God church in Tucson. He had mixed feelings about speaking at the Assembly of God church. He felt thankful for another opportunity to share the Gospel, but at the same time he would have to be careful what he said when he stood behind the pulpit. The pastor of that church respected Bill's legendary success in faith-healing, but he was not interested in Bill's Scriptural teachings on the nature of God.

Over the past three years Bill had visited a number of churches in Tucson, and so far he had not found a church where his message was welcomed. That troubled him. He wanted to take his children to a church where they could hear the Gospel preached Sunday after Sunday. Not only that, he was also concerned about all those people who had moved to Tucson so they could be near his ministry, and yet there was still no church in the city where they could go regularly and hear him teaching. Since God had not told him to return to his original roll as a pastor, he did not feel led to start another church. He must leave himself free to travel as an evangelist. But the spiritual welfare of these people weighed upon him, causing him to pray that God would move on someone's heart to establish a church in Tucson where his message would be taught.

It wasn't long until his prayer was answered. 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 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 attend 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, 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 7 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 7 church ages. He wanted to put those 6 pictures from the newspaper into his book, and explain their significance.

His 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 was fine until he was about 14 or 15. It hit him again when he was 23 and again when he was around 31 or 32. Each time-it grew progressively worse. The one that hit him in 1948 was so bad that it forced him to leave his ministry for months, and it almost killed him. 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 pentothol expected his patient to sleep five to ten minutes under sedation. Instead he slept 10 hours.

The next morning Bill had breakfast with Peary Green in the cafeteria of the Ramada Inn where Green was staying. The older man and the younger man discussed what steps it would take to establish a church in Tucson. Then Bill told Peary about many of the supernatural events that led up to, and followed the opening of the 7 seals in the book of Revelation—the vision of the stake in his yard in Jeffersonville, the sword that appeared in Sabino Canyon, the seven angels that met him on Sunset Mountain, 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," he 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 know it might finally rain. 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 from the park entrance, he left his car in the parking lot and followed the trail up the eastern slope of the canyon. Soon the trail split—one branch going south and the other branch going north. Bill took the southern branch of the trail, which would take him around to those jagged peaks 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 jerked 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 it?"

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 jumped from the rocks above and landed in the arms of a cholla cactus. Perhaps the squirrel had fled from a predator in such haste that it didn't have time to look where it was jumping. Whatever the reason, it had made a fatal mistake. Two-inch long needles protect the branches of a cholla cactus and some of these needles had rammed through 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 coiled like a rattle snake at his feet, but he kicked at it with his faith, bolstered by the morning's vision and the dead squirrel he had seen in the 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 hiked into Sabino Canyon. Where the trail forked, he again turned right, which would take him south along the eastern slope. As he walked, his mind struggled with the prognosis Dr. Ravensworth had given him. It sounded so final, yet the voice from above had declared his enemy was dead. Sometimes faith and fact war against each other. 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 the vision, 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 men 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 him. Then it blinked—once, twice, three times. That told him it was real. A dove in a vision wouldn't 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 rattle snakes. This morning his purpose was simply to praise the Lord for His kindness and mercy. When he came to the fork in the trail, instead of turning to the right and going along the southbound branch, he turned left and hiked north. About eleven thirty he grew thirsty, so he climbed down to the canyon bottom and drank from a deep pool among the 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 nearly twice his height. 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 that gigantic stone eagle at the top of the cliffs, Bill prayed, “God in heaven, thank You for...”

A voice rumbled from the top of the cliffs, rushing down the slope faster than a rock slide. “*What are you leaning against, over your heart?*” Bill pushed himself back and looked closely at the triangular boulder. There, embedded in the surface of the rock at the height of his heart, were the letters: E – a – g – l – e. The letters were formed out of white quartz and stood out clearly against the darker colored base material. 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 bluffs above. Then, during some ancient earthquake, it tumbled into the canyon, splitting as it fell, coming to rest part way down 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.

Chapter 95: The Last Days  
November-December 1965

Beginning on Thanksgiving Day, William Branham preached four 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: *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 complete, 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!”

Friday night he 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 him from God’s point of view.

On Saturday morning Jack Moore hosted a breakfast at a local hotel, after which Bill preached, “Trying To Do God A Service Without It Being His Will.” 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 from 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 11:21—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) he preached “God’s Only Provided Place of Worship”—which is, as always, under the shed blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. Then on Sunday night he preached “On the Wings of a Snow White Dove,” borrowing this title from a popular country-and-western song that had a religious theme. Bill told how the

Lord met him on that trail in Sabino Canyon and gave him a sign through a snow white dove. At the end of this sermon he sang “On the Wings of a Snow White Dove.”

He sang:

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.

The chorus was always:

On the wings of a snow-white dove,  
God sends His pure, sweet love,  
A sign from above,  
On the wings of a dove.

The second verse went:

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 Him His sign on the wings of a dove.

He added a third verse that applied specifically to him:

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, Bill 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 Businessmen'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 First 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 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 other ages. They're caught together and the trumpet calls them all to the feast in the sky. We're right there ready now. The only thing left is the church coming out has got to lie before the sun to ripen. 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 7 seals opened, and those mysteries were revealed."

"One day when I started to preach these 7 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 in 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."

On Sunday night he preached at an Assemblies of God church in Rialto, California, fifty miles east of Los Angeles. He called his 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. He talked about the mansion Jesus is preparing for each Christian, explaining that the mansion is actually a new body for the believer. He talked about the confidence we can have in this promise that Jesus made, because through many signs and wonders Jesus proved He was Jehovah manifested in flesh. Life is uncertain; death sets right before each one of us. We don't know the day or the hour we might die, only that it

is inevitable for everyone.<sup>187</sup> Bill stressed how Jesus Christ is the Word, and explained how the bride must be positionally placed in the Word for her hour. 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.” He spoke of how Christians have changed their concepts of heaven in the past fifty years, and he ended his sermon by recounting his experience beyond the curtain of time, when God gave him a glimpse of paradise in the sixth dimension.

The following night at a FGBM banquet in San Bernardino, Bill preached “Modern Events Made Clear By Prophecy.” His text came from Luke 24: 13-35. 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 22:1-18—He cried at the cross, “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, and so forth.

Isaiah 50:6—He was scourged.

Isaiah 53:7—He kept silent before His accusers

In 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 most important events of that day. Likewise, Christians can understand the most important 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. He 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

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<sup>187</sup> The only exceptions will be those believers who are alive on the earth at the moment the bride of Christ is caught away to the wedding supper.

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."

By the first of November, 1965, Pearry Green had located an empty church building near downtown Tucson. By the middle of the month he had rented it, cleaned it up and opened the doors. He called 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 there how happy he was to finally have a church in Tucson that he could attend regularly. The last time he spoke at Tucson Tabernacle was on Sunday evening, December 12, 1965. After Pearry Green's sermon, Bill talked for 30 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 feet-washing. These are divine orders. We must do these three things as symbols." His sermon "Communion" would turn out to be his last recorded message. When he finished his sermonette, 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, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God."<sup>188</sup>

The next day Bill took Pearry Green out to see his new den room. When they drove up to Bill's new home, Pearry noticed a broken wagon wheel decorating the yard near the driveway. The wheel had wooden spokes and a metal rim holding the wooden perimeter together. The pioneers and early settlers of Arizona used this type of wheel on their wagons. When Pearry asked about the broken wagon wheel, Bill explained that it was a reminder of his first family. After Hope and Sharon Rose had died, he had a dream where Sharon Rose met him out West by a wagon with a broken wheel. Of course, she was just a baby when she died, but in the dream she was a young woman. She greeted him and pointed out the path to Paradise, where Hope was waiting for him.

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. The most 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 air. Large picture windows graced the north wall, giving the den a beautiful view of the Catalina Mountains. 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

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<sup>188</sup> Mark 14:25

three Javelina boars.<sup>189</sup> The caribou was the one he had shot in British Columbia in September 1961, the one that God had showed him would have a 42 inch long antler. On the floor in front of the fireplace lay a rug made from the silver-tipped grizzly bear he shot on the same hunting trip. Beside the bear rug lay a rug made from an African leopard, a gift from Sidney Jackson. Mounted on a wall-plaque was world's record trout he had caught on Idaho's River-Of-No-Return. 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 lion had just come for a drink of water.

Of course the den had a desk that was lined with a few dozen Bible reference books. The desk and books were for the man of study. The bear-rug was for the man of prayer. The mural and the windows were for the man of vision. The guns and the trophies were for the man of the wilderness.

As soon as Joseph and Sarah got out of school for their Christmas break, Meda packed their clothes into suitcases and Bill loaded the suitcase into the back of his 1964 Ford station wagon. Bill planned to spend the Christmas/New Year holidays in Jeffersonville. Having grown up in that northern climate, there was something about spending a snowy Christmas with family and friends that warmed his heart and invigorated his spirit. He had written his notes for a message he planned to speak at Branham Tabernacle on Sunday, December 26—a sermon he planned to call, “Unto Us a Child Is Born; Unto Us A Son Is Given.” After New Years day, he would have to bring his children back to Tucson for school, but later in January he planned to return to Jeffersonville and hold a special meeting at Branham Tabernacle. He wanted to teach on “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 following Cain's genes all the way to the beast in the book of Revelation.

Bill, Meda, Sarah and Joseph left Tucson on Saturday morning, December 18, exactly one week before Christmas. (Rebekah stayed behind in Tucson.) Bill headed east on highway 10 toward New Mexico. Billy Paul followed in his car, along with his wife, Loyce, and their two young sons. Around six o'clock that evening, the two families stopped to eat at Denny's Restaurant in Clovis, New Mexico, just a few miles from the Texas border. When they came out of the restaurant, Bill asked Joseph to ride with Billy Paul in the other car.

Bill started his station wagon and pulled onto the highway. Meda sat on the front seat next to the right side door. Sarah laid down on the back seat and fell asleep. Near the state

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<sup>189</sup> Unfortunately William Branham's den didn't have any of the trophies 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. The trophies never arrived, which meant they were probably 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.

border is a town called Texaco, New Mexico. On the east end of Texaco they needed to make a left turn to get on the highway that would take them northeast to Amarillo, Texas. Bill missed this turn, so at the next intersection he U-turned his station wagon, came back to the highway interchange and made the correct turn. He soon caught up to Billy Paul, who had made the correct turn and had pulled over to the side of the street to wait for him.

When Billy Paul saw his father's station wagon in his rear view mirror, he turned his steering wheel to the left, stepped on his gas pedal, and took the lead. Twilight cast its long shadows over the two-lane highway. Darkness was fast approaching. Billy Paul turned on his car lights. The next town on their route was Friona, Texas. Approximately three miles from Friona, Billy Paul came upon a slower moving car in his lane, which he passed. As he pulled ahead of the slower car, he noticed a single head light approaching from the horizon. 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 and down into a shallow ditch, narrowly missing his own destruction. The offending car raced past him without swerving, as though the driver was drunk and oblivious to his danger. As Billy Paul swung back onto the highway, he looked in his rear view mirror to see if the car he had just passed would escape unharmed. He saw the crash, heard it faintly, and felt it as a sickening feeling in his soul. Knowing that his father would stop to help the victims, Billy Paul turned his car around and drove back to the crash site. When his headlights shined upon the wreckage, he was shocked to see that his father's Ford station wagon had collided with a 1959 Chevrolet.

Billy Paul stopped on the far shoulder of the road. He told the children to stay in the car, and then he and Loyce ran across the road to the wreck. The hoods of both cars had meshed, and the metal fenders had crumpled. Billy Paul was horrified to see his father lying face down on the hood of his wagon. The impact had thrown him forward so violently that he broke the steering wheel as his body plunged through the windshield. Now his left elbow was pinched in the door, and one of his legs was twisted around the steering wheel column.

Desperately, Billy Paul cried out, "Daddy, speak the word!"

Bill mumbled, "I won't."

"Meda's dead!" screamed Loyce from the other side of the car.

Meda was crumpled into an ungainly heap on the floor under the dashboard. Billy Paul ran around the station wagon and grabbed his step-mother's wrist, feeling for a pulse. He couldn't feel one. He ran back to the driver's side of the wreck and spoke to his father, this time getting no response.

Joseph screamed from the car parked across the highway. Bill lifted his head slightly and asked, "What was that?"

"It's Joe, but he's all right. Daddy, it looks like mother is dead."

"Where is she?" Bill asked.

"She's on the floor."

"Put her hand in mine." Slowly, painfully, Bill pulled his right hand back into the car and extended it toward the passenger side. Billy Paul lifted Meda's limp hand and placed it in his father's hand. Bill prayed, "Oh God, don't let mother die. Leave her here with us." Billy Paul felt again for Meda's pulse, and this time he could feel it—weak, but it was there.

By now more cars had stopped and other people were offering to help. Someone drove into Friona to notify the State Patrol of the accident. Police cars, ambulances and tow trucks converged on the scene. Paramedics loaded Meda and Sarah into one of the ambulances and rushed them to the nearest hospital. The second ambulance carried away both young men who were in the back seat of the demolished Chevrolet. There was no rush to

move the two young men in the front seat. They were dead. They probably died at the moment of impact. Alcohol had claimed two more victims.

William Branham presented a problem. He was pinned so badly in the wreckage that someone would have to risk injury to get him out alive. Billy Paul volunteered. While two tow trucks stretched the car lengthways, Billy Paul crawled into the front seat and unwrapped his father's leg from the steering column. Then he kicked the driver's side door outward and helped the paramedics extricate his father. The whole process took an agonizing forty-five minutes.

As soon as he got to the hospital, Billy Paul began his phone-vigil, contacting family and friends—so many friends. News of the accident spread quickly, causing the phone in the waiting room to ring all night. He didn't have much to tell the anxious callers. At 8 o'clock the next morning, Pearry Green walked into the room, took the phone from Billy Paul's weary hand and guided him to a couch, where he promptly fell asleep.

Pearry Green began answering the phone for Billy Paul. He soon had some concrete news to report. A nurse told him that William Branham had just come out from surgery and his condition was still critical. She asked if he would like to see him. Pearry Green suggested they wake Billy Paul, but the nurse thought it best to let him sleep.

Pearry entered the intensive care unit, stopping first at Meda's bed. She seemed to be unconscious and didn't answer him. Her face was swollen terribly. Sarah Branham was not in the intensive care unit, so 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 the song, Bill opened his eyes and smiled weakly. 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."

When he heard about this sign in the sky, Bill tried to sit up and say something, but his words were lost in the tracheotomy tube. The nurse came and said, "Mr. Green, your five minutes are up."

Over the next three days more people arrived to join the vigil in the waiting room. On Tuesday the doctors told Billy Paul the pupils in his father's eyes were swelling, indicating a concussion. The doctors suggested that they operate to relieve the pressure inside his skull. After praying with the 65 men who had come to offer their support, Billy Paul signed the permission papers. The operation did what the doctors hoped it would do, but William Branham remained unconscious. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday passed with no improvement in his condition. The men in the waiting room took turns answering the phone. Pearry Green volunteered for the early morning shift—3 to 6 a.m. On Friday morning at 4:37, the nurse told Pearry that William Branham had stopped breathing on his own, so she had connected him to a breathing machine. The day passed—a cold, windy day outside, and a glum, cheerless day in the waiting room. Around 4:30 in the afternoon Billy Paul went to the cafeteria to eat. Pearry Green sat alone in the waiting room. A nurse came out from Intensive Care 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 and gave him the message. Together they walked to Dr. Hines office. Dr. Hines said, "Mr. Branham, I regret to inform you that your father expired at 4:37 p.m."

It was Christmas Eve. Billy Paul said, "Pearry, take Daddy home."

The funeral was held in Jeffersonville on December 29, 1965. Meda and Sarah had recovered sufficiently from their injuries to be there. Several thousand people attended the funeral. Since all of them could not fit inside Branham Tabernacle at one time, hundreds of people listened to the service on their car radios. As the funeral dismissed, it took over an hour for everyone to file past the casket and view his body one last time.

Billy Paul wanted his step-mother to decide if her husband should be buried in Jeffersonville or in Tucson. Because she was suffering from a concussion, two months passed before she finally decided. On April 11, 1966, William Branham was buried in Eastern Cemetery on the corners of 8<sup>th</sup> and Graham Streets in Jeffersonville, Indiana, just a block away from Branham Tabernacle.<sup>190</sup> 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.*

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 the previous century. People are inspired when they read biographies about men like Charles Finney, Charles Spurgeon, Dwight Moody, and Smith Wigglesworth, but few people today study the sermons these men preached. William Branham is different. He was more than just a great evangelist, and his influence goes beyond just inspiration. When, in 1956, he changed his emphasis from divine healing to the teaching of a broad range of Bible doctrines, his decision had far-reaching consequences.

After his death, William Branham's tape-recorded sermons continued to be mailed out from Branham Tabernacle to everyone who requested them. In March of 1966, Roy Borders began printing booklets of William Branham's sermons and sending them out from Tucson. He named his operation Spoken Word Publications. Requests for these printed sermons grew steadily year by year. In 1967 Roy Borders printed in one volume William Branham's ten sermons on the 7 seals. Because William Branham couldn't edit these sermons the way he had the 7 church ages, Roy Borders printed the 7 seals verbatim. This made them a little more difficult to read, but it made it easy for people to follow along in the book while they listened to the tape recordings. In 1969 Roy Border's moved his printing operation to Jeffersonville and combined it with Branham Tabernacle's tape duplicating ministry under the name: Voice of God Recordings, Inc.

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 format. Not all copies of these sermons came out of Jeffersonville. Some originated from various cities in the United States, Canada, South America, Europe, Africa, India and the Far East. Each year more and more of William Branham's sermons are being translated from English into dozens of other languages. Half a century after William Branham shifted his emphasis to teaching, millions of people all over the world are still benefiting from his insight into Bible truths.

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<sup>190</sup> In May of 1981, Meda Branham was buried next to her husband.

William Branham's ministry was unique in modern history. He did not borrow from the past, or copy from his contemporaries; he blazed a new trail—or rather, he cleared a very old trail that had become so overgrown and tangled with the branches of traditions that only traces of it remained. Now that the pathway is visible again, it remains for men and women of lesser gifts, but of no lesser calling, to follow in his footsteps—not to do what he did, but to go where he led... into the presence of God.



Soon after I heard about William Branham in 1970, I wanted to write his biography. But I was only eighteen and the thought of such a huge project intimidated me so much that I never got started. Seventeen years later, when circumstances forced me to redirect my life, God inspired me to pursue my youthful dream and attempt to write the life of this great man, even though I knew I could only work on the project in my spare time. The year was 1987. When I told others about my decision, I added jokingly, "So what if it takes me ten years to finish. I'm going to do this no matter how long it takes." That light-hearted remark would turn out to be an understatement.

For 17 years I averaged 12 hours a week on this project, logging somewhere around 10,000 hours of work by the time I finished it on April 4, 2004. Just the research alone was an enormous undertaking. Many times I felt like I had bitten off more than I could chew, but I kept chewing anyway, and swallowing, trying to digest what I learned so I could convey it in simple sentences. I have written 380,000 words in my effort to put William Branham's life into perspective, and I still feel like I haven't done justice to the story. In fact I have only scratched the surface of his experiences and his message. Perhaps this is how John felt when he finished writing a biography about his friend Jesus. He wrote, "*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 about this Scripture when he penned these lines:

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 one of those scribes. After 17 years of trying to record the love of God expressed in the life of William Branham, I am laying down my quill. What I have written must now stand, regardless of its shortcomings. Fortunately this biography is not the last word on William Branham. His sermons are readily available in the form of books, cassette tapes, CD's and other formats, including a computer software program. If you are interested, you can easily learn more about this man and his message.

William Branham never wrote a book, (although he did have one ghostwritten for him), he never hosted a radio or TV show, and he never started a denomination. Even so, today there are millions of people worldwide who attribute their vision of Jesus Christ to the message that he preached. These Christians have no headquarters on earth. It would be naive to think they agreed on every doctrine. But they do agree that William Branham had the spirit of Elijah and was ordained by God to restore the revelation of Jesus Christ to the last church age; and by so doing, prepare a people for the second coming of Christ.

In this biography I have laid out compelling evidence which supports this view. Of course you will have to draw your own conclusions. But while you are pondering the evidence, consider this: Here is a man whose life parallels, in one form or another, every major ministry recorded in the Bible. What more could God do to vindicate a prophet? When the Jews were debating whether or not Jesus was the Christ, John said, "*...many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?*" (John 7:31) I would like to ask you a similar question. If William

Branham did not have the spirit of Elijah, when Elijah does come to the Gentiles, will he have more vindication than this man did?

In Malachi 4:5-6 God declared, *“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, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”* In 1933 God told William Branham, *“As John the Baptist was sent to forerun the first coming of Jesus Christ, so you will forerun His second coming.”*

After 17 years of research and writing, my conclusion is this: If William Branham was not a prophet of God, then there never was such a thing as a prophet, and consequently there is no such being as God. It is that simple.

Personally, I believe God is.

Appendix:  
The Essence of William Branham's Message

During the 17 years it took me to research and write *Supernatural: The Life of William Branham*, I studied over 1100 of his sermons. Based on this research, I have distilled William Branham's message down to five principles that I believe cover the width and breadth of a Christian's life. They are:

1. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is simple, yet immeasurably powerful.
2. The purpose of the Gospel is to create people in whom Jesus Christ has preeminence.
3. All things work together for the good of those people in whom Jesus Christ has preeminence.
4. The weakest Christian can defeat Satan by simply applying God's Word with faith.
5. God interprets His prophetic Word by bringing it to pass.

## Endnotes and Sources for Book 6

### Chapter 82—The Revelation of Jesus Christ

William Branham is taken beyond the curtain of time. Message sources: 60-0402, 19-2 through 24-2; 60-0611B, E87—E108; 60-0803, E27—E40; 61-0305, E17—E25; 63-0115, E8—E16; 63-0322, 376-5 {347} through 384-5 {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.

William 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.

A woman wearing a brown suit and skirt who signified a change in William Branham’s ministry: Message sources: 57-0309E, E52; 59-0406, E12—E19; 63-0714E, 23—27.

William Branham’s visions of the dark, leathery-skinned man, 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.)

William Branham’s revelation in Sportsman’s Hollow, first concerning Malachi 4 and then concerning the 7 church ages: Message sources: 62-014m, 10-2 through 11-1; 61-0117, E48—E51; 60-1204m, 32—38.

The overview of the 7 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 7 church ages*, by William 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: 60-0108, 379—388; also the book, *An Exposition of the 7 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 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: 61-0209, E28; 61-0315, E15; 61-0316, E41; 61-0402, 162—167; 61-0411, E68—E70; 61-0429, 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 Men's Voice Magazine*, March 1961 issue (Vol. IX, No. 2) Note: the wording of the 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. Also note: Sometimes William Branham reads it as "...*the* tremendous victory in love divine," and other times he says, "...*their* tremendous victory in love divine." The meaning is the same, but I used the word "their" because it conveys the idea of a larger context to this prophecy, one in which the Bride of Christ is a beneficiary.

William Branham addresses the Chicago ministerial association and the events leading up to this breakfast meeting. Message sources: 61-1230e, 40-5 through 42-4; 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, 267-5 through 269-1; 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 testimony, "I Am A Witness."

## Chapter 84—Wilderness Visions Fulfilled

William Branham sees a vision where he mortally wounds a little snake, and the events surrounding this vision. Message source: 61-0611, 21—44.

William 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 Owen Jorgensen's personal interviews with Ed Byskal and Ed Byskal's testimony on a videotape called, "I Am A Witness." Bud Southwick's personal testimony concerning this event, recorded on the same videotape. (See bibliography under Bible Believers.)

The Lord speaks to William 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 William Branham sees a vision of his mother as a bride. Message sources: 62-0127, E9—E11; 63-0118, E72—E87.

William 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” 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 3 weeks prior to Tuesday December 12, 1961.

#### Chapter 85—The Day His Rifle Exploded

William Branham’s 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 23-7 through 25-2 (edited.) Starting here, the quotations summarizing the morning sermon come from the next 8 pages.

Note: William Branham’s statement “Jesus was a spoken eternal Child,” is not the same thing as saying that Jesus was the eternal Son of God. William Branham said elsewhere that Jesus was the Son of God, but he could not be the eternal Son of God, (like the Catholics teach) because a son has a beginning and the word eternal denotes something that had no beginning as well as no ending. Personally, I don’t see these two statements as contradicting each other. To say that Jesus was a “spoken eternal Child” is the same thing as saying that Jesus was a “spoken Word Child.” God spoke into existence an egg and a sperm cell in Mary’s womb, bypassing the genetic hybridization inherent in the serpent’s genes. Although both the egg and sperm cell were genetically human, they both came directly from God by the creative power of His spoken Word. God’s Word is eternal, as Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall never pass away” (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33.) Message source: 62-0318e, 73-4. Related discussion —Jesus is the Son of God, but not the eternal Son of God. Message sources: 57-1002, 273-385; 60-1204m, 226. 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, 88-4, 64-0404, E17; 64-0417, E35; 65-0429b, 77

The original version of William Branham’s essay is found in “The Spoken Word is the Original Seed.” An edited, polished version is found in *An Exposition on the 7 church ages*. They differ in paragraph construction, but not in doctrinal content. I found neither version as clear as it could be, so I blended elements of both versions into the version I have included here. Also, because of length considerations, I only included the first 8 of the 27 paragraphs found in the Church Age Book version. Message sources: 62-0318e, 119-4 through 120-5 and Church Age Book, 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.)

William 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—Vision of Angels

A cyst grows on Meda’s left ovary. Message sources: 63-1229e, 16-2 through 21-3; 64-0120, 65—128; 64-0500, E89—E101. Other sources: *Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health*, by Miller and Keane, p. 262.

The Internal Revenue’s tax case against William 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, Volume 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 William Branham in the shape of a pyramid, and the events surrounding this: Message sources: 62-1223, 3—5; 62-1230, 14—32; 63-0324e, 577—578 {402—405}; 63-0802, 14—17; 64-0500, E36—E37.

The list of mysteries is found in *Is This The Sign of the End, Sir?* Message source: 62-1230, 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 his hand: Message sources: 63-0317E, 68-6 {11} through 69-1{13}; 63-0324E, 561-1{276} through 562-4 {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 Owen Jorgensen’s personal observations.

Seven angels meet him northeast of Tucson. Message sources: 63-0324E, 560-1 {268} through 561-1{276} and 577-3{402} through 578-2{407} (angels took me into that pyramid); 63-0601, E7-E8 (he says the picture 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); 64-0112, 62-64 (God declared it in the heavens before He did it on earth); 65-0219, 25-3; 65-0410, 35-4 (angels put a sword in his hand); 65-1126, 252; 65-1127B, 60-92 (here 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. 8, Issue 8, Roy Roberson’s Testimony; Vol. 5, No. 1, Issue 13, 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 7 seals

Note: William Branham’s 10 sermons on the 7 seals are transcribed in a 500-page book called *The Revelation of the 7 seals*. In my summary of these 10 sermons, I basically

followed his line of presentation. However, because he did a lot of reviewing from seal to seal, the information in my summary is a composite of what he taught that week. For example, under the 4<sup>th</sup> seal I summarized his teaching about the “blood of Christ as a 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, 1-3 to 1-5 (new format, 3-4) edited.

Quotation that begins: “Many people miss God by the way He reveals Himself.” Message source: 63-0317m, 20-3 to 20-5 (new format, 113-114) edited.

Quotation that begins: “I want to shock you a little bit.” Message source: 63-0317m, 57-4 (new format, 371) edited.

Note: In Revelation 5-8 John does not describe the physical structure of the scroll and its seven seals. I based my description on scrolls of antiquity, and also on clues I got from William Branham’s explanation of the seven seals in 63-0318, 117-5 {6} and 123-5 {45}; and 63-0321, 282-1 {21}. Although I am not certain of the physical structure of the seals, that is not important or God would have been specific in describing it to us. It is the meaning of each seal that is important.

Note: The Ark of the Covenant, which sat in 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 was obtained. When, in the Old Testament, did that mercy seat become a judgment seat? It happened at the beginning of the reign of Solomon. King David, who was Solomon’s father, typed Jesus Christ during his earthly sojourn in Israel. Solomon types the reign of Jesus Christ during His Millennial Kingdom on this earth. King David’s reign was characterized by struggles and wars. Solomon’s reign was characterized by peace and prosperity. King David pardoned many people who had sinned against him during his lifetime, but he told Solomon to see that justice was done after he was gone. He had pardoned Joab, one of his army generals who had murdered two rival generals. After David died, Joab fled to the tabernacle, and clung to the horns of the altar in the outer court. Solomon sent Benaiah, the captain of his guards, to kill Joab as he clung to the altar. The hour of mercy was over. Compare I Kings 2 with Exodus 21:13-14.

Quotation that begins: “Although this Book of Redemption has been probed at through six church ages...” Message source: 63-0317e, 74-1 to 74-3, (new format, 39 to 42.) edited.

Quotation that begins: “While the ten virgins were sleeping...” Message source: 63-0317e, 106-3 to 107-2 (new format 262-269.) edited.

The Pillar of Fire appeared to him each day and supernaturally revealed to him the mysteries of the 7 seals. Message sources: 63-0318, 122-2 (new format, 35); 63-0322, 349-2 (new format, 111); 63-0324m, 462-3 (new format, 36.)

Quotation that begins: “That sounds good, but it isn’t the truth.” Message source: 63-0318, 156-1 to 157-1 (new format, 266—271) edited.

The supernatural way these seven mysteries were shown William Branham is noted on the pages {paragraphs} from the Revelation of the 7 seals, as follows: 63-0318, 122 {35-38}; 63-0319, 178 {11}, 180 {21}; 63-0320, 269 {294}; 63-0322, 333 {5}, 336 {25} he stayed and ate with the Wood family, 345 {83}, 349 {111} showing the revelation came to him in the presence of the Pillar of Fire; 361 {215} he says he saw a vision of the souls under the altar, 373-374 {326} he saw a vision of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> coming of Elijah, and the second coming of Moses; 63-0324, 462 {36} Pillar of Fire.

## Chapter 89 – His Last Temptation

William Branham sang while driving back to Arizona: This tidbit came from Gene Norman's testimony in "*Only Believe Magazine*" Vol. 5, #1, Issue 13, page 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, #2, (Issue 8).

Note: William 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 William Branham as a sign. However, in 1983 the U.S. States Department of Agriculture designated a certain type of Montana soil as "Branham Soil."

Note: Here is another curious thing I discovered while writing this story. God emphasized the seven letters in BRANHAM. After this experience, William Branham noted how ABRAHAM also had seven letters in his name (after God changed it from Abram to Abraham.) Abraham is considered the father of the Judeo-Christian faith. Throughout history there has never been another major Christian leader whose name ends with "H-A-M" until the twentieth century with Billy GRAHAM (six letters) and William BRANHAM (seven letters.) I noticed that if you take the English spelling of ABRAHAM, and then change the first "A" by moving the center cross-arm to a vertical position on the right (making the "A" into an "N"), then move this "converted letter" three letters over to the right and insert it—and the name ABRAHAM becomes BRANHAM. I don't mean to make a lot out of this, other than it is interesting.

He looks at the picture of the cloud of seven angels that formed over Arizona. Message sources: 63-0601, E7-E8; 63-062M, 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; 64-0112, 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, page 112; article in *Only Believe* magazine, "The Road to Sunset", pg. 7 and Gene Norman's testimony, pg. 15.

Note: The picture of the cloud of angels that appeared in *Life* magazine was taken on the last day of February, 1963. After hearing some of William Branham's comments about this picture, many people assumed he was hunting on February 28<sup>th</sup>. However, hunting season began on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March in 1963. An examination of all the things William Branham said about the visitation of those seven angels led me to conclude that the angels appeared twice in the same location, eight days apart. They first appeared on the evening of February 28, near sunset. They remained long enough to be photographed many times, and thus announced in the heavens that something stupendous was about to happen on earth (63-0601, E7-E8; 64-0112, 62-62). They met William Branham in the same location on morning of March 8<sup>th</sup> while he was hunting. On this day they rose and formed that same cloud above William Branham that was photographed a week earlier. (65-0219, 25-3; 65-1127B, 75) This explanation covers all the things he said about the cloud of angels, including the one on page 560 {268} of the 7 seals book, where he says that the night before he met the seven angels, God told him to consecrate himself for a visitation the next day.

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 William Branham while driving from Hot Springs, Arkansas to Jeffersonville, Illinois 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.)

#### Chapter 90 – Sermons Like Thunder

William Branham had personal interviews where he wrote out their questions and answers before they asked. Message sources: 63-0728, 8-10; 63-0802, 12.

#### Chapter 91 – Stopping A Storm in Colorado

Visits J.C.Penny Store and flashes back to hell. Message source: 63-1110m, 14-18.

He goes hunting in Colorado in the fall of 1963. Message sources: 63-1110e, 76-151; 63-1128m, 38-119.

Consider his mysterious burden. 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; 64-0312, E89-E101.

#### Chapter 92 – Earthquake

William Branham is hunting javelina hogs near Sunset Mountain 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; 65-0725, 143-145; 65-1126, 38-60; 65-1204, 191. Other sources: Douglas McHughes' testimony in *Only Believe* magazine, Volume 5, No 1 (June 1992); Roy Roberson's testimony in *Only Believe* magazine, Volume 3, No 2.

Quotation that begins: "Our experience is not to match some creed..." Message source: 64-1205, E61-E63, edited.

#### Chapter 93 – Eliezer Delivered The Invitation

William Branham shoots a mountain lion in Arizona. Message source: 65-0217, 29-36.

A Catholic priest hands William Branham a Bible, fulfilling a passage in Isaiah. Message sources: 65-0124, 65-0125, 65-0219. Other source: *Acts of the Prophet*, by Peary Green, pp. 31-35.

Information concerning the writing of the book, *Exposition on the 7 church ages* came from *Only Believe* magazine, Volume 4, Number 2, Issue 11, pp. 6-10, an article by Rebekah Branham Smith.

God speaks to William Branham on Finger Rock. Message source: 65-0221, 47.

Quotation that begins: "I'm speaking only to those people who follow me and this message..." Message source: 65-0221, 48-49, edited. The description of Finger Rock comes from the author's personal observations.

William 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.

He didn’t recall prophesying the destruction of Los Angeles. Message source: Message source: 65-0711, 49.

The story of Florence Shakarian comes from Acts of the Prophet, by Pearry Green, pp. 111 and 119.

William 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, Volume 4, Number 2, Issue 11, pp. 11-15.

William 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 Leads An 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: 65-0833M, 72-77, edited.

#### Chapter 95—The 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: “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: “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.

Details of the car wreck and of William Branham’s death come from the chapter called “Last Moments,” in Pearry Green’s book, *Acts of the Prophet*.