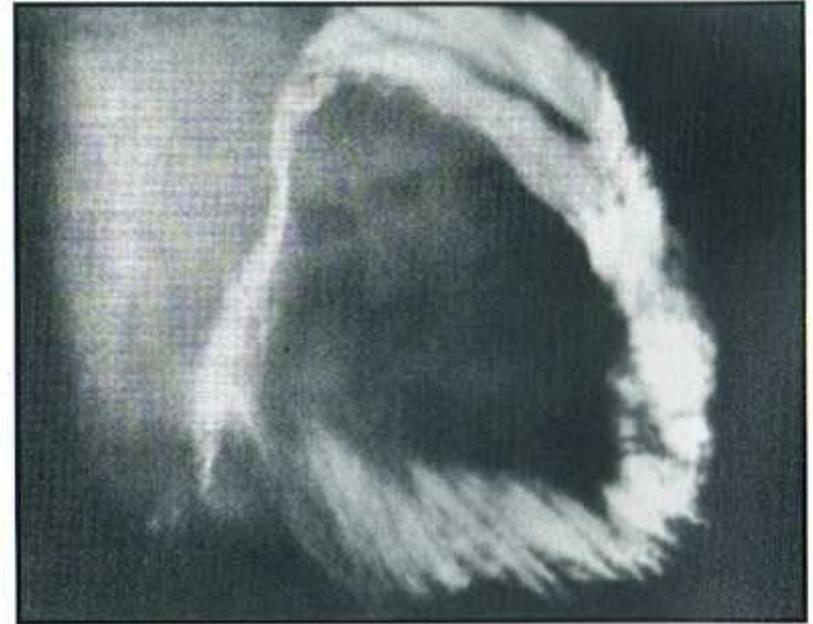


# Christ and His Church In Prophecy

By E. Frank



On the 28th of February, 1963, this supernatural cloud appeared near Sunset Mountain in Arizona, as shown to Rev. Branham beforehand in a vision on 22nd December, 1962. The picture reminds us that when Christ ascended, He was taken up in a cloud (Acts 1: 9). HE will return in like manner (v. 11). Could this be a sign of His near coming? Although this picture was taken from a great distance, a likeness of the face of our Lord is clearly visible.

The issue of "Science" magazine, 19th April, 1963, published an article about this phenomenon and also carried the picture on its front page. One of the largest weekly publications, "Life" magazine, reproduced the photograph of this cloud along with a report on the 17th May, 1963. The phenomenon of this mysterious cloud could not be explained by scientists. The cloud hung against a blue sky at an altitude that was much too great for moisture to be present to form a cloud. What a vindication from the Almighty, confirming the commission given to His prophet! The Lord God hath spoken, who can but hear!

## Introduction

The purpose of this exposition is to focus your attention upon CHRIST AND His CHURCH IN PROPHECY. From the beginning of time, men of God have recorded the sacred acts of the Almighty. They gave testimony of what they saw, heard and experienced. Such witnesses were in the Old and the New Testament.

We are still living in Bible days and we still have access to the things the LORD does. God is not dead, as some suppose.

I have ministered in over 100 countries around the world and was invited to speak in various churches, such as Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, the Pentecostal assemblies and others. Any true servant of God disregards the barriers set up by men. He knows that God has His children everywhere. Ministers and congregations were overwhelmed, as the plan of salvation was laid out before them and the Word was expounded in the light of the fulfilment of Bible prophecy.

Internationally-oriented ministers of the different denominations admit and confess that William Branham was used of God in an unsurpassed way in this generation. Some try to belittle his ministry with the intention to destroy his God-given influence among the people. They cannot deny that he was a mighty prophet, yet they warn against his Bible teachings. This doesn't make sense. Bitter and sweet water cannot originate from the same fountain.

A major prophet is a seer, who has the divine revelation of the Word and is ordained from his birth for a specific purpose (Jer. 1: 5).

The inspired sermons of this humble man sent from God cast new light upon the Word. You will be surprised at the spiritual and timely information contained therein. Some, of course, will find things hard to understand, but thus it has been even in the days of the apostles (2 Pt. 3: 16).

The unlearned and unstable have misused certain statements to their own destruction. Therefore it is most essential to line all teachings up with the Holy Scriptures and make the Bible our absolute.

Please read this booklet prayerfully. May its contents cause you to receive a better understanding of the whole plan of salvation. May you love the LORD Jesus Christ more than ever before. **Do not judge by what people do or say! Be aware of the seriousness of your decision. Be sure it's right!**

May God bless you richly.

The Author

## CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH IN PROPHECY

This is indeed a great time in the history of mankind. New discoveries are being made in every field. Enormous progress has been achieved the unbelievable has transpired. Nothing seems impossible anymore. This generation has witnessed the transition from the days of the horse and buggy to the space age. Everybody is striving to keep up with the time. Now the big question arises: Are we up to date in the things of the Kingdom of God? What about our spiritual progress? Did we go along with the moving of the Holy Spirit, as the LORD is about to take us into the highest heights?

Perhaps you are a Christian - grateful for what God has done in times past. Maybe you are even looking forward with anticipation to what He will do in the future; but the vital question is, "Are you realising the acts of the Holy Spirit now, as He is leading the Bride of Christ to perfection?"

The Church of Jesus Christ was founded on the day of Pentecost, when God Himself set the pattern for true Christianity throughout the Gentile dispensation. He will recognise nothing but His Word. Every individual, every assembly must compare their doctrines, their foundational beliefs and experiences with the teachings of the early Church. Each believer had a personal supernatural experience with Christ and was placed into the Church by the Holy Spirit as son and daughter of God.

Sad to say, although the Church had such a glorious beginning, carnality gradually crept into the realms of the redeemed. People began to wax cold and formal and started to teach their own creeds and legalistic doctrines. As the time went by, indifference set in - the majority of Christendom began to diverge from the path of light and stoop into spiritual darkness. But the LORD watches over His own. He sent a messenger to each of the seven church ages to kindle the fire of God afresh. The small minority group always held fast to the faith of the apostolic fathers. The great Holy Spirit moved in their midst and guided them into the promised Word for the hour.

*"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise"* (Gal. 4: 28). The children of promise receive the **Word** of promise and are sealed by the Spirit of promise (Eph. 1: 13).

In the days gone by, the revivals that have swept across the nations were times of refreshing from the LORD, in which He drew the attention of His children to the very fulfilment of the promised Word. The faith of Abraham and all his seed has always rested upon the promises God made.

God has always graciously led His own and directed their path. Even during the Dark Ages, they were able to endure savage persecutions and

tortures, because God was with them. With thankful hearts we can look back to the days of the Reformation and the revivals that followed, in which God led His own step by step into deeper light. We cannot, however, stop with any of the past visitations, out of which many denominations have sprung up. The Spirit of God never stays within the limited boundaries of an organisation; He continues to move and manifest His power amongst all true believers until they are moulded into the blessed image of the LORD Jesus Christ. Soon He will return for a Word-Bride without spot or wrinkle.

At the turn of this century, a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place; the gifts were restored to the children of God. All over the earth, people experienced a time of spiritual refreshing from on High. The old-timers of every country can testify of that powerful visitation of Almighty God. But He didn't fail His own thereafter. Many are still a living testimony of the mighty salvation and healing revival that followed World War II. In His great compassion and love, the LORD kept wooing His children by His Holy Spirit to attract their attention to the promised Word for our day. According to His Word, He purposed to illuminate the details of His eternal plan and disclose the great mysteries hidden throughout the ages.

This last move started out under the direct commission of Almighty God, given to William Branham in May 1946. His unique and outstanding salvation and healing ministry had a great impact upon the masses. The LORD Himself confirmed the Gospel before the eyes of hundreds and thousands of people around the globe. However, when the true Bible doctrines were taught, the masses were not willing to accept them. It became apparent that they were after the loaves and the fish. The group

of the true followers of Christ narrowed down again and only a minority is embracing the prophetic ministry in its entirety by recognising the day and its message - they are ready to follow the LORD wherever He leads.

Since the days of the apostles, the Word of God has not been preached in its fullness as in this revival of restoration. Jesus Christ has manifested His power and proved Himself to be the same yesterday, today and for ever, in the true meaning of the Word. Those of us privileged to live in this last church age have seen the light and were brought out of spiritual darkness. The Word-Bride, the elect of God, are returning to the original scriptural teachings under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We have now reached the very last days of the complete restoration of the Church of the living God as promised in Joel 2: 25, "*And I will restore to you the years ...*". Acts 3: 21 plainly states that the heaven must receive Christ "*until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the age began.*" Jesus Christ will return for a Bride completely restored to His Word.

Whenever God sent a spiritual revival, His people took heed to the divine call and separated themselves from all unbelief, indifference and formalism. They moved on as the Holy Spirit led.

Never before in history have there been evangelistic and religious activities on such a full-scale basis as in our day. Never have we had the means and possibilities as now; but it also has never been so difficult to find your way through, as right and wrong is so closely associated together in these very last days. Jesus said in Mt. 24: 24, that towards the end the times would be so deceptive that even the very elect would be deceived, if it were possible. Thanks be to God, it is not.

We hear so much about Christ and the Church, but where is He found the way the Bible presents Him? Where is the Church as the Scripture describes her? Does not every Christian denomination claim to be 'the church'? Are not all the religious activities ascribed to the Name of Jesus Christ? Everyone claims to be right, but mere claims justify no one. In the sight of God, there is only one true Church - the dwelling place of the Most High, "*the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*" There is only "*one LORD, one faith, one baptism*" (Eph. 4:5). All members of the body of Christ are joined together with one another and with Him (1 Cor. 12: 12).

We all must refrain from any private interpretation and let the Word of God speak for itself. The hidden treasures are discovered and brought to light through the prophetic ministry in our day. We realise that the coming of the LORD Jesus Christ is very near and cannot afford to listen to the many voices around us. We must hear and obey the call of the voice of the Good Shepherd, who is beckoning His sheep to follow Him. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mt. 4: 4) - not just by some passages, which fit into our own conception, but by every Word of God.

Let the Bible be the only authority and guideline in all scriptural things. We are now treading upon holy ground, as we deal with the Word of prophecy. Just take off your shoes, while the LORD speaks.

### **Christ in the different aspects**

God's Word shows the LORD Jesus Christ forth in His many different offices and titles, as He manifests Himself in the plan of redemption. He is seen as the *Lamb of God* taking away the sins of the world (Jn. 1: 29). He is the *High Priest*, who entered into the sanctuary with His own blood (Heb. 9: 11-12). He is the *Mediator* between God and man (1 Tim. 2: 5) the *Advocate*, making intercession for us (1 Jn. 2: 1). He is the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*

(Rev. 5: 5), the *KING OF KINGS*, the *LORD OF LORDS* (Rev. 19: 16). *He is all in all to the believers, God manifested in the flesh* (1 Tim. 3: 16). He is the *Son of God*, *Son of man* and *Son of David*.

The four Gospels describe the life of Christ, His ministry and sufferings, His death, burial, glorious resurrection and blessed ascension. He purchased His own on Calvary by shedding His holy blood. On the day of Pentecost, He returned in the form of the Holy Spirit and took abode in the ones He had redeemed. Since then, He is working through them, performing the same acts as He did during His earthly ministry. He vindicates the preaching of His Word by confirming it with signs following (Heb. 2: 4).

The early Church "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Can we say the same? They realised that the apostles were inspired to write and speak under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Can the same be said of us as individuals and of the church we belong to?

The epistles describe the functioning and the order in the Church. According to Eph. 4: 11 and 1 Cor. 12: 28, God has set in His Church apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists and pastors. Those ministries are God-ordained for the admonition and perfection of the body of Christ. He has also placed the spiritual gifts for the upbuilding and edification of the Church (1 Cor. 12: 4- 11). Every true member of the body of Christ bears the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5: 22-26). May it be clearly understood that all the Word of God is still valid.

The Word of God gives us the clear and precise information of all the ministries, doctrines and ordinances in the Church. No one needs to be misled. Anyone desiring to do right, is able to follow the true Bible pattern. Perfection can only be achieved by obeying all the foundational teachings of the Bible. "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection..." (Heb. 6: 1).

The prophetic aspect of Christ and His Church is very important, especially in a time like this when Bible prophecy is being fulfilled. Of course, we could speak about the current chaotic world situation, the signs of the end-time, about Israel and many other topics. We are grateful to Almighty God, who keeps His promises to the Jews as well as with His Church. Every true believer looks upon Israel in favour, regardless of the relationship and outlook of the country he lives in. The nation of Israel and her survival is a miracle in itself. "Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the coasts afar off, and say, He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock." (Jer. 31: 10).

Surely, God will never forget Israel and keep all His good promises to the natural seed of Abraham until His purpose with them is accomplished. Two things are running parallel in this generation - the **gathering of the Jews from all nations** and the **calling-out of the Bride of Christ from amongst all organisations**. Everything is now reaching its climax in the fulfilment of prophecies. The final victory will soon come and the Most High will be glorified. It is most thrilling to recognise the way the Bride is being prepared before the rapture takes place. Thereafter the Spirit of the LORD will lift from the Gentiles and the LORD will reveal Himself to His brethren, the Jews (Zech. 13).

To gain an overall view Of CHRIST AND His CHURCH IN PROPHECY, we must turn to the book of prophecy, the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Iyue Christians always keep their balance in the Scripture and acknowledge every Word in its proper context.

The four Gospels mainly portray the life of Christ from His birth to His ascension. The epistles contain all the doctrines and ordinances of the New Testament Church. Likewise does the book of Revelation show forth Jesus Christ as the *Son of man* in the midst of the seven golden lampstands. It so pleased the LORD to open the Word of prophecy in our time.

John was privileged to see a preview of all the things which were to transpire until time merges into eternity. We must rightly place all things and see them in their proper perspective in the light of God's holy Word, as we watch the fulfilment thereof.

The Revelation opens up with a special blessing: "*Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is at hand.*" (1: 3). It ends with a most serious admonition, which needs to be considered very, very carefully, "*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*" (22: 18-19). These words speak of a complete cut-off from the LORD and eternal life.

Throughout the church ages, people have read the last book of the Bible, but were not able to understand those things, because prophetic mysteries remain hidden until the time of the fulfilment comes. It is sad to say that ministers and others have privately interpreted the things contained in the Gospels, the Epistles and the prophetic Scripture instead of confining themselves to what had been revealed by the Holy Spirit.

As the theologians at the first coming of Christ have given their own views instead of just waiting and watching for the very fulfilment of Bible prophecy itself, so is it happening again in our day. Ministers and churches are so set in their own ways and doctrines, they have no room for spiritual revelation. Explanations and interpretations of prophetic subjects of God's holy Word have caused much confusion amongst the believers. Bible prophecy is written to let us know ahead of time what God has purposed to do. It leaves no room for speculations; it must be recognised as it comes to pass.

Let us take heed to the advice Peter gives under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, "... knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." (2 Pet. 1: 20).

### The Patmos Vision

While John was on the Isle of Patmos, he was taken up in the Spirit to see the prophetic part of the plan of salvation in symbols. He was shown the church ages and what was to happen up to the end of time. He even saw the new heaven and the new earth.

He testifies, "*I was in the Spirit on the LORD's day...*" (Rev. 1: 10). Some assume the *LORD's day* to be the Sabbath, others claim it is the Sunday. Both views are carnal interpretations. A twenty-four hour day could not have been in question, for John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos for a period of two years.

The Bible clearly describes the *day of the LORD*. It is the span of time that begins after the *day of grace and salvation* is over. It commences with the judgements upon all the nations, which will gather against Jerusalem, "*Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.*" (Joel 3: 14-16).

The first three chapters of Revelation speak of the things that apply to the New Testament Church, they suffered persecution, they of salvation and the culture of grace. "... behold the salvation of our God, and he will avenge them of all their enemies. ... beholding the day of the LORD, begin and end with a mighty demonstration of the power of God in victory over His enemies.

The time of grace extends until the Bride of Jesus Christ has reached perfection and is taken up into glory. God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh (Ex. 31: 17). Soon 6,000 years will be completed, then the seventh day, the *day of the LORD*, begins. "*But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the LORD as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*" (2 Pet. 3: 8).

Some people fanatically believe that anyone who worships on Sunday has the mark of the beast. Everyone must be exceedingly careful not to misconstrue the 'Holy Scriptures with such a fateful and disastrous assertion. Would anyone dare to say that Christ had the mark of the beast because He met with His disciples on the first day of the week? "*Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*" (Jn. 20: 19). He reappeared a week later, when His disciples were gathered together again (v. 26). Can anyone say that the early Christians had the mark of the beast because they worshipped on Sunday? "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.*" (Acts 20: 7). Paul even had the collection for the saints laid aside on the day after the Sabbath. "... *Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*" (1 Cor. 16: 1-2).

The Jews were to commemorate the Sabbath, "*Wherefore the children of Israel (not the Gentiles!) shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel (not the Gentiles) for ever*" (Ex. 31: 16-17a).

Whenever the LORD Jesus Christ or the apostles preached to the Jews, it was on the Sabbath, because that was the day the Jews worshipped. The Christians, however, honoured the day of the resurrection, but were never restricted to a certain day like the Jews were. All true disciples of Jesus Christ have peace, with God and entered into the true 'Sabbath rest'. This rest does not apply to just one day of the week - no, it is an eternal rest!

History records that the papal system issued a decree stating that the Sunday was to be the only day of worship for Jews and Christians alike. The Christians had assembled themselves on that day since the time of the apostles. What a terrible repercussion this edict had upon the Jews, however, no one can imagine! The Roman church accused them to have been guilty of the death of Christ and directed this authoritative proclamation against them. "... beholding the day of the LORD, begin and end with a mighty demonstration of the power of God in victory over His enemies.

God has His way with the Jews, He also has His way with the Gentiles. The Sabbath was given to the Jews as a sign of His covenant with them, and the Gentile Church commemorates the resurrection of the LORD Jesus Christ. God never intended for the Jews to keep the Sunday, neither were the Gentiles told to keep the Sabbath.

Some people even believe that the keeping of the Sabbath is the seal of God. This has no scriptural foundation. The Bible speaks very plainly of what

the seal of God - the seal of the Holy Spirit - is. Those, who have listened to the sermons of Bro. Branham have come to a clear understanding of what the seal of God and also what the mark of the beast is.

The harvest of the New Testament Church was foreshadowed by the sheaf offering, which was waved before the LORD on the morning after the Sabbath (Lev. 23: 10-11). The day of Pentecost, the fiftieth day, also fell on the day after the Sabbath (Lev. 23: 15-16). The Sabbath will be the day of worship also during the millennium, *"And it shall come to pass that, from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD."* (Isa. 66: 23).

Discussions and disputes over eating and drinking or the keeping of days are not upbuilding to anyone. ***"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come..."*** (Col. 2: 16-17).

John was taken up in the Spirit for a far greater purpose than for us to commemorate a twenty-four hour day. He saw the whole span of time and the things of importance that were to transpire. The same great Holy Spirit, who showed these things to John, has revealed them now through the prophetic ministry.

### **To show unto His servants...**

Almighty God has never failed to give clear directions to His people by sending His messengers, the servants and prophets, with His special Word for their time. If the people, in their abundance, forgot the LORD and didn't walk in His ways, God sent a message of warning to them before judgement was to strike, *"Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD, and they testified against them, but they would not give ear ... Thus saith God: Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? Because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you."* (2 Chr. 24: 19+20b). God's judgements are pending once again. What is the message now, before they will strike?

I would like to draw your attention to the book of prophecy - the Revelation of Jesus Christ, in which the LORD promised, *"to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass..."* (1: 1). These prophetic messages were sent to correct the people and bring them back to God. The success or failure of your own spiritual life depends on how you determine and value the Word of the LORD. The Holy Spirit in you will always cause you to say 'Yea and Amen' to the promised Word.

The word 'servants' is in the plural and points primarily to the seven messengers in the right hand of the LORD, who were to receive the prophetic revelation of the Word by the Holy Spirit during the seven church ages.

The fact that the LORD sent His angel to John shows the importance of the contents of the last book of the Bible. *"... And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant, John"* (v. 1b). God has His angels in heaven and His messengers on earth to declare the things which must come to pass.

Not every member of the body of Christ can be such a servant of God, to whom the Word of the LORD comes and whose ministry is directly attributable to the voice of God, but everyone **must hear the voice of His Word**. God takes someone of His own choosing to give witness to what he has seen and heard. John *"... bore witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."* (Rev. 1: 2). Like the servants and prophets of old, so did he see visions and receive the Word by revelation. There is a vast difference between having the knowledge of the Word, which can be accumulated, and the revelation of Jesus Christ, which can only be received by the Holy Spirit. Only then will the Word become Spirit and life to us.

There is a great difference between someone speaking about Christ, or Christ speaking through a prophet, who has the "THUS SAITH THE LORD!" Paul, the great apostle, confesses, *"For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."* (Gal. 1: 12).

### **The Voice like a trumpet**

Whenever a special occasion arose and something extraordinary was to take place, the trumpet was sounded, calling the people together for a feast or an announcement. When the LORD God descended upon Mount Sinai to meet with His prophet Moses, who was to receive His Word for the people of Israel, *"Mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice."* (Ex. 19: 18-19).

The trumpet sounded in the days of Joshua, when seven priests took seven trumpets and went before the Ark of the Covenant, in which the Word of the LORD was kept (Josh. 6).

God's trumpet sounds, when He is ready to speak. Such a trumpet alerts His people to hear His voice, to receive His Word and experience the victory.

Such a sounding of the trumpet was heard again in our generation and will be with Israel at the time of their gathering. The Scripture tells us that the

mystery of God will be finished in the days of the sounding of the voice of the seventh angel, as he hath declared unto His servants the prophets (Rev. 10: 7).

We have already seen that an angel is a messenger, who has a message of God for the people. Under the sounding of the voice of the seventh angel, the mystery of God will be finished, as it was revealed to His servants, the prophets.

Let us bear in mind that the word 'prophet' has a twofold meaning. In the New Testament Church there were apostles, prophets, teachers etc., but whenever something outstanding was to take place on earth, God sent a major prophet to announce it.

In the church of Antioch were several prophets and teachers (Acts 13: 1). *"And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great famine throughout all the world, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar."* (Acts 11: 27-28).

Such a prophet may foretell events of personal nature or circumstances. Agabus also prophesied and predicted what would happen to Paul (Acts 21: 10-11). According to 1 Cor. 14: 29, two or three prophets were to speak in the church, the others were to judge.

When a major prophet, a seer, arises, he is a spokesman for Almighty God, who utters the Word by divine revelation and shows forth the predictions pertaining to the prophetic part of the plan of salvation. We are to hear and believe, not to judge such a prophet. There was only one Enoch, one Abraham, one Moses, one Noah, one Elijah, one John the Baptist and one Paul in their days. No one was needed to judge those prophets, for they had the "THUS SAITH THE LORD!".

There were apostles, prophets, teachers, etc. in the first church age, but it was given to Paul, the prophet-messenger, to expound the things to the Church. In 1 Cor. 14: 37 he writes, *"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the LORD."* Anyone truly called of God to one of the five offices of Eph. 4: 11 will accept the true Word of the LORD that goes forth by the God-sent messenger.

In every one of the seven church ages, there were great men in the eyes of the people: no doubt, they were used of God in various ministries. But there was also God's choice in each age to bring forth the message of the hour. There are many well-known eloquent evangelists in this generation, but who is the messenger, to whom the Word of the LORD came in our day?

## Son of man

Jesus Christ is the **Son of God, the Son of man** and the **Son of David**. Each title describes Him in one of His different offices and cannot be interchanged. In connection with the Word of prophecy, He is shown forth as the Son of man. *That is why He is not likened unto the Son of God or the Son of David, but as the **Son of man*** walking amidst the seven golden lampstands (Rev. 1: 13).

Because Bible prophecy was fulfilled at the time of His first coming, the writers of the four Gospels spoke of Him almost exclusively as the **Son of man**. Even the LORD Jesus referred to Himself as the **Son of man** during His earthly ministry. He was the fulfilment of Dt. 18, later referred to by Peter, *"For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the LORD, your God, raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul, who will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."* (Acts 3: 22-23).

Moses and Elijah of the Old Testament; Peter, James and John of the New had the privilege to see the LORD Jesus Christ transfigured before them, *"... and his face did shine like the sun, and his raiment was as white as the light ... While he yet spoke, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and, behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; HEAR YE Him! And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were very much afraid."* (Mt. 17).

John testifies of his reaction to when he beheld Him, *"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last"* (Rev. 1: 17).

If we have accepted Him as the **Son of God, our Saviour**, shouldn't we fall at His feet and behold Him, as He speaks His Word of authority as the **Son of man - the God-prophet**?

In Rev. 2 and 3, Jesus Christ addresses His angel-messengers to the seven church ages. At the closing of each, we read the same words, *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches". "EVERY SOUL WHICH WILL NOT HEAR THAT PROPHET, SHALL BE DESTROYED..."* God's Word means what it says. Our eternal destiny is at stake. If the soul has received life, there is still the danger of losing it, if we neglect to partake of the spiritual food, God's revealed Word, whereby we live spiritually. *"... And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life..."* (Rev. 3: 5). Be aware of the weight of such an utterance! These are not the words of a minister or any other man: Jesus Christ Himself, the **Son of man, the God-prophet**, is speaking

His Word, which is Spirit and life. Every soul that does not hear the words of that prophet is in great danger.

Each time one of the star-messengers came on the scene, he did not promote his own cause. None of them spoke in their own behalf - no, they were the stars in His right hand, reflecting the very light of Jesus Christ. They were the actual mouthpiece of Almighty God.

The words "HEAR YE Him!" have more significance than we can possibly comprehend. Amongst all the different religious voices in the world today, there is also the true voice of God. The days have come, in which we must hear the voice that sounds like a trumpet. We have to receive the original spoken Word, if we are the true seed of God.

Peter, who was present on the Mount of Transfiguration, was inspired by the Holy Spirit to record the divine statement, "... *Him shall ye hear in all things, whatever He shall say unto you.*" (Acts 3: 22).

There is only one '**the Son of man**', only one 'the Prophet'. His messengers are called servants and prophets. He is '**the High Priest**', '**the King**' - we are kings and priests. He is '**the Son of God**' - we are sons and daughters of God.

The fact that Jesus Christ is shown forth as the '**Son of man**' in prophecy, points out that His prophetic ministry continues on throughout the entire span of the New Testament era.

The epistles, beginning with Romans and ending with Jude, describe Him as the **Son of God**. Not once were the terms '**Son of man**' or '**Son of David**' used there. This is not coincidental, for they were not dealing with prophecy. Their main purpose was to establish the New Testament Church with all the doctrines and ordinances and show forth Jesus Christ as the '**Son of God**', who manifests His saving and healing power since the Day of Pentecost.

To the Jews, Jesus Christ is the **Son of David**. When He entered into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the multitudes sang aloud, "*Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!*" The children in the temple also shouted with joy, "*Hosanna to the Son of David!*" (Mt. 21: 9 + 15). As the **Son of David**, He will sit on His throne, ruling as King over all nations during the millennium. As **Son of God**, He is the Saviour; as **Son of man**, He is the Prophet, and as **Son of David**, He is the King. Never can these three titles be interchanged. Each title: **Son of God, Son of man and Son of David** speaks of a definite manifestation of His attributes and offices. Not one scripture can be exchanged, neither can one title be interchanged with another, although the same person is spoken of.

Every name and title attributed to Him has a special significance in the connection given and must be left in its proper context.

Much is being said about Jesus Christ, the **Son of God**, but only a small number of people understand the dispensation of grace, the **revealing of the Son of man, the sign of the Son of man** and finally, **the coming of the Son of man** was to take place.

LORD Jesus three specific questions, "*Tell us, when shall these things be? - **What** shall be the sign of thy coming? - And of the end of the world?*" The LORD had just finished telling them that not one stone of the temple would stay upon the other. The first question was fulfilled shortly after, when Titus marched into Jerusalem and conquered it. The city was demolished, the temple destroyed and the Jews were scattered.

The second question concerns us the most, "... *what shall be the sign of thy coming?*" They did not ask about the many signs He had spoken of, which were to precede His return; their question was in the singular, "... *what shall be the sign of thy coming?*"

Please note! It is called '**the sign of His coming**'. Therefore it has to be in connection with His coming. A sign is given for guidance and directions. If we want to be ready for His coming, we must read the sign that points to His coming. The Jews will see the sign of the **Son of man** (Mt. 24: 30) before He descends on to the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14).

The Word of God declares that He was taken up in a cloud (Acts 1: 9), and shall return in like manner (Acts 1: 11). The supernatural cloud reminds us of the Old Testament visitations of Almighty God on various occasions and also of the Mount Transfiguration experience.

What is the significance of the LORD appearing to Bro. Branham in a cloud on Feb. 28th, 1963 before the opening of the mysteries of the seven seals? Could it be that it was the sign of His coming to alert His own? Now is the calling-out and preparation time - the coming of the LORD lies before us. Anyone claiming that Christ has returned or will return in any other way than the Scripture declares it, has been blinded to the Truth and is in delusion.

A sign is a signal expressing or conveying a meaning, serving for information or giving directions. A scriptural sign has always a scriptural voice following it. Those who recognise the sign then hear the voice.

After the sign of the Son of man appearing in a supernatural cloud, **the voice** of the LORD was heard. The seals were opened, the hidden mysteries revealed. The Bride of Christ has also seen her last sign on earth through the

In Mt. 24,

prophetic ministry, before she is taken into glory. Facts cannot be denied. The attention of the elect in this generation is drawn to the things the LORD has done.

In Luke 17, Christ refers to the days of Noah and the time of Lot, "*Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.*" (v. 30). Both times, the Word of the LORD was made known to a prophet. Before the flood came, Noah was informed of what was to happen. Before the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, the LORD spoke to Abraham. Both of these men were major prophets. Abraham received the confirmation of the promise to have Isaac. The LORD also revealed the very secret of Sarah's heart.

The same discernment ministry was repeated when the LORD made known the secrets of their hearts to Nathanael, Peter, the woman at the well and others. The very same ministry was witnessed in this generation. All who are acquainted with the prophetic ministry of Bro. Branham know about the holy atmosphere present whenever the gift of discernment was in operation. All over the world, people were told of their illness, their problems, where they came from, etc. A sacred hush settled over the audience, for truly, the presence of the LORD was there.

Luke 17: 30 speaks about the day, when the **Son of man** shall be revealed. Verses 34-36 describe the actual taking away of those, who are ready to meet Him. "*I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left...*" Without doubt, this scripture speaks of the rapture. Let it be understood! The taking away of the Bride could not take place before -the **sign** and the **revealing** of the **Son of man**.

In Luke 18, Jesus Christ asks, "*... when the Son of man (not the Son of God or the Son of David) cometh, shall he find faith on earth?*" (v. 8). If we do not recognise the **sign of His coming** nor hear the **voice of the Son of man** through the prophetic Word, how can we be ready at the time of His actual coming? The Church of the living God must forsake all man-made traditions, realise the very fulfilment of Bible prophecies and see Jesus Christ, the **Son of man**, in His Church, holding the seven stars in His right hand - walking and talking amidst the seven golden lampstands.

Any Christian welcomes the LORD Jesus Christ as the Son of God, but only the elect follow Him in the prophetic ministry of the **Son of man**. All the others misunderstand Him. As it was in the days of His first coming, so is it now: "*He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*" (Jn. 1: 11). At the end of this last church age of Laodicea, He says, "*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*" (Rev. 3: 20).

The condition is *to hear Him knock - to open the door and welcome Him*. Only then will He come in to sup with us. He still breaks the bread of life and our hearts are burning while He speaks. He is addressing this message to believers, not to sinners. He is standing outside the church, beckoning to open up and let Him come in.

Of course, the religious activities are still in full swing. Much is said about Him in songs and in preaching, but in reality, He is standing outside, rejected and misunderstood by the majority, because He revealed Himself as the **Son of man - the prophet**, bringing to pass His promised Word. We are told, "*Hear ye Him!*", "*Give ear, o ye inhabitants of the earth, for the LORD speaketh!*" ' "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*"

Those who crucified the LORD of glory then were the most religious people on earth; the promises and the covenant belonged to them. They thought to be very close to God and His Word.

Jesus Christ is being crucified afresh now and is put to open shame by those, who actually claim to believe in Him and in the covenant promises, but misunderstand Him in His ministry as the **Son of man**. The LORD has given the consolation, "*My sheep hear my voice...*" (Jn. 10: 27).

Israel was brought out of Egypt according to God's promise. But because they did not obey the voice of God and did not take to heart the things He said, they were not permitted to enter into the promised land. "*... Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee; and upon earth he showed thee his great fire, and thou heardest His words out of the midst of the fire ... Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD, he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else.*" (Dt. 4: 36 + 39).

The words of warning addressed to us are found in Heb. 12: 25, "*See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven*". It does not say anything about refusing Him who saves or heals us, but **Him that speaks - the Prophet, the Son of man**. It is a very serious thing, if the LORD God speaks and His people do not hearken unto His voice.

"*Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.*" (Heb. 3: 15). We must hear **His voice** today - in the day we are living in. This is our 'today'.

## **The mystery of Christ and His Church**

Jesus Christ had offered Himself to be the once and for all perfect sacrifice for the sins of fallen humanity on the cross of Calvary. The greatest triumph of the ages was His, as He led captivity captive and broke every bond of prison for the ones He had redeemed. Then He ascended on High and returned in the form of the Holy Spirit to indwell and manifest Himself amongst His own throughout the ages, until He returns for His immaculate Bride, as she stands dressed in the robes of His righteousness.

What a beautiful picture of Christ and His Church in prophecy is being portrayed in the Book of Revelation! John saw Him walking amidst the seven golden lampstands as the **Son of man**.

*"And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden lampstands;*

*And in the midst of the seven lampstands one like the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girded about the breasts with a golden girdle.*

*His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were like a flame of fire;*

*And his feet like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice like the sound of many waters.*

*And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in its strength.*

*And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last;*

*I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death.*

*Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter:*

*The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven lampstands which thou sawest are the seven churches." (Rev. 1: 12-20).*

In this prophetic view, the LORD Jesus Christ is shown in His glorified state, walking and talking amidst His Church. The golden girdle about His

breast pictures Him as a judge, *"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God..." (1 Pet. 4: 17).*

John didn't see Him as the Son of God, saving the lost and healing the sick, he didn't see Him placing the different ministries within His Church. He did not speak about spiritual gifts, the twelve apostles or the seventy disciples, he saw the LORD Jesus Christ as the **Son of man holding** the seven stars in His right hand. His Word *"... is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* (Heb. 4:12). *"He that is of God heareth God's words" (Jn. 8: 47). "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (12: 48).*

The LORD Jesus Christ is introducing Himself to the seven churches as the all-sufficient One, *"I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."* (Rev. 1: 8). This is His final revelation to His Church. He had been described in His many attributes and aspects pertaining to the redemptive plan. Here He is unveiled in His complete Deity.

The golden lampstand - the Church - was already spoken of in the Old Testament. The prophet Zechariah saw the seven-branched lampstand and testifies, *"I have looked and, behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and its seven lamps on it, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top of it" (Zech. 4: 2).* The oil from the container was channelled through the seven pipes and filled the seven lamps. The same God, the same Holy Spirit, came down in each of the seven church ages to give the true revelation to the living Church.

While the prophet Moses was on the mount, Almighty God showed him the pattern and gave him detailed instructions of how to build the tabernacle (Heb. 8: 5). It was to be the dwelling place of the God of Israel, as He re-established His fellowship with the covenant people and received their worship and offerings at the altar.

The Tabernacle was to be divided into two sections - the Holiest of all and the sanctuary, wherein stood the seven-branched golden lampstand and the table with the showbread (Heb. 9: 2-3). Moses was instructed, *"And thou shalt make a lampstand of pure gold: of beaten work shall the lampstand be made; its shaft, and its branches, its bowls, its knobs, and its flowers, shall be of the same."* (Ex. 25: 3 1). This spoke of the blossoming of the Church. The whole lampstand was made of one and the same lump of gold. Nothing was added to it or taken away. What a wonderful picture of the Bride of the LORD Jesus

Christ! She is one with Him and is made of the same material, washed in His blood, born again and sealed by His Spirit.

The seven-branched golden lampstand was a lampstand, which did not hold candles as we know them today, but lamps filled with oil, which were lighted and trimmed daily by the priests and kept burning constantly (Ex. 27: 20-21). They illuminated the sanctuary for the ones who entered in to partake of the table of the LORD. The lamps were not the actual light, they manifested and transmitted the light which they received from the oil container. These seven lamps on the golden lampstand represented the Church of the LORD Jesus Christ in prophecy in the seven distinct ages.

Situated opposite the golden lampstand was the table with the showbread, upon which lay the loaves of unleavened bread (Lev. 24: 5-6) - a prophetic picture of Christ, the Bread of Life for every believer. These loaves were eaten by the priests and we, as the royal priesthood of the New Testament, must partake of the LORD Jesus Christ, the living Word, for He said, *"I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."* (Jn. 6: 35).

The altar of incense was put before the veil and incense was to be burned upon it every morning and every evening, when the lamps were dressed and lit. Once a year, the High Priest was to make an atonement upon it with the blood of the sin offering upon it (Ex. 30: 6-10).

You may ask: What has all that to do with us? We are to *"walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour"* (Eph. 5: 2). We as the New Testament believers bring our prayers before Almighty God as a sweet smelling savour, *"Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands, as the evening sacrifice."* (Ps. 141: 2). *"For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ..."* (2 Cor. 2: 15).

We read of the altar of incense in Rev. 8: 3-4, *"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."* - not the prayers of those who claim to believe, but the prayers of the saints, the ones who are sanctified by the Word and the Spirit of Truth. *"And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of the harps, and golden vials full of incense, which are the prayers of saints."* (Rev. 5: 8). All the prayers of those, who recognise the promised Word of the covenant, ascend to the throne of the Almighty as a sweet-smelling savour of incense. The prayers of those truly believing the message brought by the star-messenger -

the earthly angel to the church age - are taken up to the throne of God by the heavenly angel. The revealed Word for each age goes forth from the throne of God, and the prayers of His saints who receive it return back to the throne. *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."* (Isa. 55: 11).

*"... the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God."* (Heb. 9: 6). But before they could minister unto the LORD, they had to be consecrated and sanctified unto the service of the LORD: *"And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy."* (Ex. 30: 29).

The priests were brought to the tabernacle of the congregation and had to *"wash their hands and their feet, that they die not."* (Ex. 30: 21). After they were washed, they had to be clothed in the holy garments that had been made especially for them according to the exact instructions the LORD gave. Then they were anointed.

What a beautiful picture of the Bride of the LORD Jesus Christ! She is redeemed by His holy blood, He has sanctified and cleansed her with the washing of the 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."* (Eph. 5: 26-27). His Church can say, *"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."* (Isa. 61: 10). She is anointed and sealed by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1: 22). The Church of Jesus Christ is *"... a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation..."* (1 Pet. 2: 9). *"Unto him that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us a kingdom of priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory, and dominion for ever and ever Amen."* (Rev. 1: 5b-6).

The Holiest of all was separated from the sanctuary by the veil. *"And after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the Holiest of all, which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, in which was the golden pot that had manna; and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat..."* (Heb. 9: 3-5).

When Jesus Christ, the perfect sacrificial Lamb, died on Calvary, His blood atoned for our sins. The veil was not rent asunder when the High Priest offered the animal sacrifices, but when the Son of God gave His life for the sins of the people, *"... the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom..."* (Mt. 27: 51) clearing the way to the mercy seat in the Holiest of all.

The law was fulfilled and grace took over. The very fact that the veil was rent from the top to the bottom, showed that God Himself rent the veil, which kept the congregation from the holy presence of the Almighty.

The Old Testament worshipper could not go beyond the veil and live, but now, if we don't follow our High Priest and mighty King, who has conquered the forces of the enemy, who has placed his own blood upon the mercy seat, into the Most Holy, we remain dead in sin and trespasses. Christ is our High Priest, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedec, the King of Salem, the King of peace, the LORD of glory (Heb. 7). He is the High Priest of our confession, who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb. 4: 14-15).

The dimensions of the Most Holy were equal in length, width and height, speaking of perfection. This description is identical with the one given of the New Jerusalem -the future home of the Bride of Christ. *"Come here, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God ... The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."* (Rev. 21: 9b-16). What beautiful mansions the Bridegroom has prepared for His Bride! If she has entered the Holiest of all here on earth, she will live with Him in that New Jerusalem for ever.

The Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat were in the Holiest of holies. The two cherubims had their faces directed towards the mercy seat. They were made of the same piece of beaten gold as the mercy seat (Ex. 37: 1-9). The Word was kept in the Ark of the Covenant. The LORD looked down upon His Word, which is always before Him as He watches over it to perform it (Jer. 1: 12). God had made a covenant in the Old Testament, He made one in the New. *"And he said unto them, This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many."*

The Ark of the Covenant also contained the golden pot of manna, signifying wherever the Word is, the fresh spiritual food in due season is found. The overcomer of each church age feeds on the hidden manna, the revealed Word. The manna the children of Israel received daily contaminated until the next day, but the manna kept in the presence of God in the Ark of the Covenant never spoilt. We are not to take the left-overs from one church age into the next. There is a promised Word for each age and fresh food from on High for those, who make up the holy priesthood in Christ.

Aaron's rod that budded was also kept in the Ark of the Covenant. God Himself had ordained him and his sons to be priests and therefore testified in a supernatural way, so that the dry stick blossomed and bore fruit overnight. The Church of the living God is made up of a blossoming priesthood, bearing the

fruits of the Holy Spirit. The LORD has taken the dry bones and made a living body bearing His attributes.

Wherever the Ark of the Covenant was taken in the Old Testament, the people were blest abundantly. *"So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet."* (2 Sam. 6: 15).

In the New Testament, John saw the Ark of the Covenant. *"And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."* (Rev. 11: 19). Great is the rejoicing within the camp of the Redeemed, for the Covenant Word of Almighty God has returned to His own in these last days.

After everything was done according to the Word, the pillar of cloud came down upon the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle and led the children of Israel as they journeyed to the Promised Land. He is with His Bride in like manner, with those who line up with His Word, until they enter the pearly gates.

The seven-branched golden lampstand represents the Church of the living God in prophecy - the dwelling place of the Most High. The seven lamps speak of the illumination of God's promised Word within the seven distinct eras of the New Testament Church. The table with the showbread is a prophetic picture of Christ, the Bread of Life.

The altar of incense points out in prophecy that the overcomers, who have received the revealed Word for their day, bring their prayers before the throne of God, which are poured out as a sweet savour in His holy presence. The saints of every church age overcame *"by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death."* (Rev. 12: 11).

The first church age, symbolised by the first lamp, was lit by the fire from the altar that was kindled by God Himself on the day of Pentecost. Each lamp in the following church ages received its light from the previous one by the same flame of fire, and brought to light the promised Word. In each period were those who received and those who rejected the light of the hour.

A God-sent message always brings us back to the Word, and the Holy Spirit leads to repentance. If we don't repent and line up with the Word, the lampstand will be removed from its place, leaving us in spiritual darkness (Rev. 2: 5). The light to the congregation is only guaranteed as long as the lamps are burning. Anyone going against the light will be blinded thereby, but those who walk with the light, *"... as He is in the light, have fellowship one*

*with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (1 Jn. 1: 7). But "if we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (v. 6). To follow Christ means to follow Him in the very revelation He has given. He says, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (Jn. 8: 12).*

Of those, who saw the fulfilment of prophecy at the first coming of Christ, it is said, *"The people who sat in darkness saw great light, and to them who sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."* (Mt. 4: 16). The apostle Paul was prompted to write to us living at the time of the second coming, *"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."* (1 Thess. 5: 4).

In the days of Moses, all Egypt was in gross darkness, but the children of Israel had light in their dwellings (Ex. 10: 23). They had received the promised Word for their day and had accepted Moses, the God-sent prophet and therefore had part in what the LORD was doing in those days. The same is repeating now. Darkness is covering the earth and gross darkness the people, but in the dwelling place of the saints is the bright shining light of the revealed and promised Word for the hour.

*"I beheld and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." (Rev. 5: 6).*

Here we see the Lamb with the seven Spirits, the seven eyes, speaking of the seven angel-messengers, to whom it is given to see the promised Word for their age by divine revelation. The prophetic ministry in the Church is likened unto the eye in the body, which consists of many members. *"For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes; the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all has become unto you like the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one who is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed."* (Isa. 29: 10-11).

This is a very plain language. If the eye in the body of Christ does not see, all are in darkness. But thanks be unto God, who has sent an open vision - His revealed Word.

Many have tried to read the last book of the Bible, but were not able to understand its contents, because it was sealed. Now, in the providence of Almighty God, all these hidden things were made known. It pleased the LORD to disclose the mysteries hidden throughout the ages under the ministry of the

God-sent prophet to this last church age. It is hidden to the eyes of the wise and the prudent, but revealed to babes, such as would learn.

To gain an overall picture of Christ and His Church in prophecy, we must see the Scripture in its continuity as one subject dovetails with the other until the entire plan of redemption is laid out before us.

The priests in the Old Testament recognised and obeyed the ordinances. They realised that the way for the propitiation for their sins was made by the atonement. Through their obedience, they showed their loyalty to God.

The royal priesthood of the New Testament also shows its loyalty and obedience to God by observing the ordinances of the New Testament. We are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Our sins are forgiven. In the Old Testament, God's chosen people observed the Passover, in the New we partake of the LORD's supper, commemorating the death of Christ until He returns.

In the Old Testament, they were baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. 10: 2). In the New, the believers are baptised in water in the Name of the **LORD Jesus Christ**, after they have repented of their sins, and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit according to the promise (Acts 2: 38-39).

In the Old Testament, the priests had to wash their hands and their feet before they entered into the sanctuary. In the New, Jesus Christ Himself washed the feet of His disciples and said, ***"If I, then, your LORD and master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, the ye should do as I have done to you."*** (Jn. 13: 5-17).

Like the priests were dressed in a special garment, so is the Bride of Christ robed in the wedding garment. *"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." (Rev. 19: 8).* We have no righteousness of our own. He has washed us, He has dressed us, and He has anointed us. The Bride of Christ is sealed with His Spirit. *"... in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise"* (Eph. 1: 13).

The Holy Spirit Of Promise always accompanies the Word of promise and seals those, who believe it, into the body of Christ. There is a vast difference between someone who is anointed and someone who is sealed. Many are anointed by the Spirit, do great things, but the LORD will confess, *"I never knew you"* (Mt. 7: 23), because they did not receive the Word of Truth - the Word of promise - and therefore could not be sealed by the Spirit of Truth. They accept the blessings, but reject the Word revealed by the same Holy Spirit.

Many speak of a special ministry and point to their own achievements, but the time has come in which all things have to be checked with the Word. A true Christian is not merely satisfied with reports of revival meetings, he desires to hear the Word of God, have it penetrate deeply into his heart and bear spiritual fruit. There is a deep longing in his spirit for the reality of the LORD.

Many preach about the second coming of Christ, but like the Jews at His first coming, they are smitten with blindness. The similarity is startling. As God is about to turn His face in favour upon the Jews once again, and the Gentile dispensation is fading out, the Christians are actually rejecting and crucifying the LORD of glory afresh. Of course, they still speak about Him as their Saviour and Healer, the Son of God or the Son so David, but they reject Him as the **Son of man** in His prophetic ministry, walking and talking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands. But God has kept a small remnant, who recognised the promised Word for our time. They see Christ and His Church in prophecy.

May God grant that everyone see the significance of the illuminated seven-branched golden lampstand, representing the same Church in the seven periods, and recognise the messengers as the stars in His right hand. The glory of the LORD, the same pillar of fire, hovers over His Church as it did with the children of Israel.

### **The distinct ages**

At the time John saw Christ and His Church in prophecy, there were many local assemblies in existence, to whom Paul had addressed his epistles.

The Holy Spirit chose these specific seven churches in Asia Minor because of their characteristics, typical of the oncoming seven church ages. No Jewish church, not even the one at Jerusalem, is mentioned, because the messages are of prophetic significance and deal entirely with the Gentile dispensation.

The Bible tells us that the seven stars are in the right hand of Jesus Christ, as He is seen walking amidst His Church. He is the supreme Deity, exalted and loved in the midst of His own and whenever He sent forth His star-messengers, they spoke with authority. They are in the right hand of their Master, completely under His control. They're not in the hands of a denomination; they protested organised religion.

Although the distinct periods have been identified by outstanding historians, it has taken the prophetic ministry of William Branham to identify the seven angel-messengers, who were the stars in the right hand of the LORD and brought the message to their age.

The LORD addressed two groups within the church - the carnal and the spiritual. He spoke words of praise and also of reproof. He directed His messages to the angel of each age and introduced Himself with one of His deity titles.

According to history and divine revelation, the church ages and the messengers are as follows:

**The church of Ephesus** (Rev. 2: 1-7). *"These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden lampstands."*

The word *Ephesus* means to *let go* and *relax*. This first church age was rebuked by the LORD for leaving the first love. They began to backslide from the original Pentecostal experience, allowing the Nikolaitan spirit to creep in slyly. Men began to make up a clergy, who assumed the authority over the laity. The LORD praised the elect of this age for hating the deeds of the Nikolaitans, who sought after position and rulership. Those who remained steadfast in the original teachings could easily detect the false apostles, as their teachings did not coincide with the foundational doctrines of the Bible.

This still applies today. Any doctrine that does not dovetail with the teachings of the apostles and prophets is false. Paul was so sure of the infallibility of his teachings, that he was prompted to pronounce a curse upon everyone, who dared to preach another gospel (Gal. 1). The original spoken Word of God is Truth, and any interpretation thereof is an error and a lie of the devil. In the beginning was the Word - the original seed. But then, however, the enemy subtly questioned Eve and began to misconstrue and interpret God's holy Word in the garden of Eden. These Nikolaitans fell into his trap like Eve did.

There is a vast difference between preaching the original seed-Word or the interpretation thereof. One brings spiritual life, the other spiritual death. The enemy doesn't always deny God's Word. He even came to the LORD Jesus with the Word. Satan misuses, misinterprets and misplaces God's holy Word.

Like Jesus, so do the overcomers stay with the original Word and overcome him by the Word of their testimony. The promise to them in the first age was to have part of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Because Eve had listened to the interpretation of the serpent, she and Adam were driven out of paradise and cut off from the tree of life. But through Christ, the overcomers are brought back to the tree of life and the paradise of God.

*"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."*

The *Ephesian church age* lasted until 170 AD. According to divine revelation, given to Bro. Branham, the apostle Paul was the star messenger in the right hand of the LORD in that age.

**The church of Smyrna** (Rev. 2: 8-11). *"These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive."*

The meaning of the word *Smyrna* implies *bitterness*. The word is derived from Myrrh, an ointment associated with death. Those who had believed the interpretations of the enemy, known as the deeds of the Nikolaitans, died spiritually. By that time, they had established a priesthood, which ruled the laity, disregarding the fact that the whole New Testament Church is spoken of to be the Holy Priesthood. All denominations are patterned after that first religious organisation and are motivated by the same spirit. The outer form of appearance does not change this fact. According to God's Word, the first one is the mother, the others are the daughters (Rev. 17).

The elect of God 'did not bow to the false teachings and therefore had to go through terrible persecutions. They were told to be faithful unto death; then they would receive the crown of life. The second death could put no claim on them.

*"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."*

This church age lasted until 312 AD. Many men were used in the ministry during that time, but Irenaeus seems to have been God's choice - the star-messenger in the right hand of the LORD. He stood firmly upon the apostolic doctrines and preached the Full Gospel. His ministry was vindicated by Almighty God with signs following.

**The church of Pergamos** (Rev. 2: 12-17). *"These things saith he who hath the sharp sword with two edges."*

During this age, the Nikolaitan group became an established church and united with the state. The doctrine of Balaam was introduced. Balaam had invited the children of Israel and the Moabites to a great feast and caused Israel to fall. Likewise did Constantine arrange the Nicean Council and invited both groups. Israel had fallen into the trap set by Balaam, although they had witnessed the vindicated ministry of the prophet Moses. This sin was never forgiven.

During this church age, the apostate church and the state united Paganism consolidated with Christianity. The whole programme was arranged in such a subtle way, that the carnal Christians fell for it.

Even during that time, there were gallant men of God holding fast to the Truth. They strengthened the elect, who did not compromise with the state nor the apostate church.

The promise to the overcomer was to receive the hidden manna and a white stone with a new name written upon it, which no man knoweth, saving, he that receiveth it.

*"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."*

This church age lasted until 606 AD. According to Bro. Branham, St. Martin was the star-messenger in the right hand of the LORD. Of all the great men who proclaimed the Gospel at that time, he was the one closest to the apostolic teachings. His mighty ministry was accompanied with scriptural signs.

**The church of Thyatira** (Rev. 2: 18-29). *"These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass."*

That which had begun in its infancy in the Ephesian church, known as the deeds of the Nikolaitans, had become the ruling papal church of this period. The Church was thrust into the Dark Ages. It almost seemed there was no trace of genuine Christianity or the true Bible teachings, but God still had a remnant, who were led by the Holy Spirit according to His Word.

The LORD compared this false system with Jezebel, who had brought idolatry into Israel. They had tried to seduce God's servants to commit spiritual fornication. But God's elect did not bow to this manmade system. Even during that time of darkness and persecutions, the light of God's Word shone upon the path of His children who were not deceived. The promise to the overcomers was to receive power over the nations and rule them with a rod of iron. *"And I will give him the morning star"*

*"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches."*

This age lasted until 1520 AD. Columba stands out as the star messenger in the right hand of the LORD. His ministry was founded upon the original Word of God and confirmed by the Almighty.

**The church of Sardis** (Rev. 3: 1-6). *"These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars."*

This brings us to the time of the Reformation, in which a ray of light broke forth after the long period of the Dark Ages. God, in His infinite mercy, made a

new beginning by bringing His living Word back into the spiritual deadness. The light that was kindled in that age gradually increased, until the full revelation of Jesus Christ was made known in these last days.

The LORD said, *"I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."* This church was using the titles as the Roman church did. They did not recognise the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost to be the **LORD Jesus Christ**.

Those who believed the God-sent message at that time did not defile their garments. The promise to the elect of that age is, *"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life..."*

*"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."*

This church age lasted until 1750 AD. There were many valiant men during this time, who had part in the work of the Reformation, but according to the dynamic ministry, Martin Luther was the star-messenger in the right hand of the LORD, who came forth with the message, **"The just shall live by faith."**

**The church of Philadelphia** (Rev. 3: 7-13). *"These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David..."*

This Church received no words of rebuke from the LORD. It was the great missionary age of the open door and of brotherly love. Those inspired by the Word and Spirit of God went into all the world. People were not disputing the Word, they lived it. Great conviction fell upon those who listened to the preaching of God's Word. It was a great time in the history of the Church. The impact of the preaching was so mighty, that even those of the synagogue of Satan had to acknowledge and bow down to the Word.

The believers received the promise to be kept from the hour of temptation, which was to come upon the whole earth in this last church age, in which right and wrong are so closely associated together. By the grace of God, only the elect will be able to discern the difference between the genuine and the imitation.

The overcomers in this church age received the promise to be made a pillar in the temple of God.

*"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."*

This great church age lasted until 1906 AD. The star-messenger in the right hand of the LORD was John Wesley, who continued to carry the torch of the Word and came forth with the great revelation of sanctification.

**The church of Laodicea** (Rev. 3: 14-22). *"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."*

The condition of this church age is most pathetic and the LORD has no words of praise. Self-deception prevails: *"I am rich ... and have need of nothing*. Outwardly, they're well endowed with worldly riches, but are unconscious of the fact that they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. He that has eyes like flames of fire, looks and sees the actual condition of Laodicea.

Of course, they still sing and speak about Him, they still engage in a form of worship, but worldly activities have the pre-eminence in their midst. Instead of taking time for prayer before and after the service, people look forward to the games and entertainments following the meeting. They don't even realise that they have ousted Him - He is no longer in their midst. *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock..."* The church generally applies this statement to the sinner, but God applies it to the church. The LORD is standing outside, knocking, asking us to open the door.

Under false pretense, they give the impression that the LORD is still with them. They purposely overlook the actual situation described by the LORD Jesus Himself in the Word of God. This is the most deceptive time of all. People are still trying to work up an atmosphere of revival. They don't want to admit their condition. But because they do not believe the Truth, God is sending them strong delusions that they should believe a lie (2 Thess. 2: 11). Regardless of who it is, if we reject the Truth, we open up to error.

In the most cunning way, the enemy is setting a trap for every church and denomination, for every evangelist and preacher. He even gives the success as long as they don't recognise the message and messenger for this time. Some even claim they'll never go into the World Council of Churches, but the same spirit is upon them and they have been part of the same system unawares. Every Christian organisation is of the same spirit as the first one. Anyone rejecting God's message revealed by the Holy Spirit, will receive the mark of the beast.

I

All kinds of things are declared to be a move of the Spirit. Right and wrong are so closely associated together, that only the elect, the ones that are founded in the Word, will detect the difference.

There is the charismatic movement, which tries to bring spiritual life even into the World Council of Churches, which is, according to prophecy, the image of the beast. But God's Spirit is calling, *'Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you'* (2 Cor. 6: 17). As Christ is outside the camp in this Laodicean church age, all the elect, who hear His voice, are coming out of every religious camp and take their stand with Him the Word - and bear His reproach. But they also have the promise to share His glory.

The promise is, *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne."*

Without a shadow of doubt, there are many outstanding men in the different denominations, but who was the chosen star-messenger in our generation? The criterion must always be a scriptural one. We cannot merely go by success, impressions or personalities, we must recognise God's choice.

Without hesitation it can be said before God Almighty, that Bro. Branham was identified by the Scripture and vindicated as the angel messenger to this last church age. May all who have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, be no longer bound by tradition, but come out, be separated from all unbelief and return to the original Word of God.

### **Behold, the Bridegroom cometh**

We are admonished to remain sober in all our actions and not set any dates for the return of the LORD. May Christ find us watching and waiting - ready when He comes.

*"... That day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."* (Mt. 24: 36).

Jesus Christ pointed out the things which were to happen before His return. We are witnesses of the very fulfilment thereof. He spoke of the fig tree (Israel), He related the signs of the time and also spoke of His own sign - **the sign of the Son of man**. Jesus spoke of our time when He said, *"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."* (Mt. 24: 34).

The parable of the ten virgins recorded in Mt. 25 has currently become a burning question within the hearts of many. *"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise*

*took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him ... and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut."*

All took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom; the wise took oil in their vessels, the foolish did not. The hour is upon us, wherein the LORD is going to manifest His power and glory in the Bride - the wise virgins, who have received the true seed-Word. The foolish will recognise what a stimulation comes by revelation and they will wish to receive of the same Holy Spirit. But the Bridegroom then returns and those who are ready will go with Him.

In times past, we have heard different versions of this parable. But since we have come to understand the symbols of the Bible,, we see the prophetic meaning. The scriptural symbols of a virgin, the lamps, and oil and the vessels, etc. point out the complete picture.

Mary is called a virgin. She had found favour with God and received the Word of promise for that day from the mouth of an angel. The Holy Spirit came upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her. Because she believed, the miracle took place. The Word itself was embedded in the virgin womb to bring forth the promise - thus the Word became flesh. So is it today. The promised Word-seed of this hour is received by the wise virgins; they believe it and the power of the Holy Spirit comes upon them and takes shape in their lives.

A virgin is untouched, pure and clean. The Word in itself speaks of a believer, who has not committed spiritual fornication but has kept himself clean, holy and sanctified before the LORD. The ten virgins typify the believers in this generation. Like Mary, the wise have found favour with God. When they heard the Word of promise, they were illumined by the light kindled in this last church age.

The foolish virgins somehow missed the connection to the continuous flow of the oil of the Holy Spirit and the final preparation. Their lamps were once burning, but as they did not move on with the progressive revelation, to have part in the fulfilment of the promised Word right to the end, their lamps were not refilled and went out.

The foolish are the carnally-minded among those, who have come out of bondage. They have the letter, but not the Spirit of the Word. They were sure, the illumination they once received was all they needed. They took the lamps and thus thought to make it in the rapture, but in the most crucial hour, their oil supply failed them. It is essential for everyone to be connected to, the continuous moving of the Holy Spirit personally, right to the last moment.

When the Bridegroom tarried, all slumbered. This is the time of awakening, for the cry goes forth, "*Behold, the Bridegroom cometh...*" All ten virgins had the same beginning. Initially, they had received the light in this church age, for their lamps were burning. They all heard the same cry, trimmed their lamps and went out to meet the Bridegroom. But the crowning will take place at the end and not at the beginning of the race.

This is the time of testing. For the children of Israel, it was not enough to recognise the God-sent prophet Moses and speak about him, they had to be obedient and act by faith upon every promise God had made, after they had come out of bondage. Finally, their faith in the promise was put to the test. At the beginning, everything seemed wonderful. They rejoiced and were exceedingly glad for the miracles the LORD had wrought in their midst. But then dissatisfaction got a hold of them and they began to murmur. They judged spiritual things carnally and misunderstood the ways of God and thus sinned against Him.

The wise virgins, however, keep their balance in all things. Christ means everything to them. They do not rely upon the person of the God sent prophet, they believe the Word he brought. We must continue to go forward and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is not enough to speak about the special enlightenment or the visitation of God to this generation, we must continue to walk with Jesus Christ until we reach our destination.

The wise are hungering and thirsting for God, and they shall be filled (Mt. 5: 6). The spiritual food, the revealed Word of God, the hidden manna, was stored up for the elect of this age. There could never have been a giving-out of the food unless it was stored in first. *'Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?'* (Mt. 24: 45).

The wise virgins - the elect, the overcomers - have not only received the Holy Spirit, they have the testimony of Jesus Christ, which is the Spirit of prophecy (Rev. 19: 10). They are a part of God's endtime plan.

May we never be discontent and grieve the Holy Spirit away from us. The wise have no time to complain and murmur. They are all taken up to make ready to meet the Bridegroom. Soon Mt. 25 will be history. It will not profit anyone to have recognised the messenger and the message, if we fail to continue to walk in the light. The work of God will be perfected through divine love. All the members are united with one another and with the Head. The capping by the Headstone will soon take place. Christ is both - the chief Cornerstone and the Headstone, the Alpha and Omega.

The believers of the endtime message must not make the same mistake and speak about the things God has done in the recent past, and wait with

great anticipation for what He will do in the future, but miss the connection to what He is doing right now.

At the beginning of the New Testament, the believers could have spoken about the ministry of the God-sent prophet night and day, but had they not continued on with the LORD Jesus Christ, they would have missed all that followed, even the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. They could have spoken about all the things that had transpired in the mighty ministry of the LORD Jesus Christ Himself, but had they missed the connection to the next move of God, they would not have become a part of His plan for that time. The right attitude is to have part in what God does presently - that links us to what He will do next.

By the grace of God, we recognised Christ in His prophetic office as the **Son of man**. His Word is the "*THUS SAITH THE LORD!*" to us. May we find favour with Him in this crucial hour and have part in the things the LORD will do until we meet Him. *"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."* (Rom. 8: 11). *"For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."* (Rom. 8: 19).

### **Right attitude**

In times of special supernatural visitations from the LORD, the people who had come out of bondage had to be very careful to remain sober and in the right Spirit and attitude towards the things of God. It is easy to accept a substitute and grieve the Holy Spirit away from us. If people neglect to stay in line with the Word, they can easily slide into idolatry without realising it.

The children of Israel turned away and brought reproach upon God and His Word when they- made themselves a golden calf. It is beyond comprehension to think of how Aaron, the one closest to the prophet, could possibly gather the people together and bring idolatry into Israel. Their eyes were blinded by carnal comparisons, and they discredited the ministry of the God-sent prophet.

What an important lesson for us to learn! God is no respecter of persons. To have been with the prophet brings even more responsibility upon us. The time of temptation always comes after such a ministry. We are obligated to check all things with the Word of God. The Israelites were not aware of actually discrediting the prophetic ministry through their actions, they did not realise that they were bringing reproach upon what God had done. The Word is still valid, *"I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another..."* (Isa. 42: 8).

Could it be that history is repeating itself within the ranks of the called-out believers? The true Bride stays with the Word; she believes and obeys it. She is not side-tracked by any fanaticism. She believes that God will bring all things to pass according to His plan and purpose.

Whenever something is done by the commission of God, it is a blessing, but the very thing can turn into a curse, if the spirit of idolatry creeps in and carnal significance is being ascribed to it. It is therefore essential that all believers line up with the Word of God.

The endtime message in itself is the whole counsel of God made known by divine revelation and must be placed correctly within the unfolding of the great divine plan. We do not build upon a statement taken out of context, but upon the solid foundation of the Holy Scripture, which is our ultimate. All the messages of Bro. Branham must be identified and placed properly within the Bible. Anyone who is not willing to let the Word of God be the final authority is not guided by His Spirit and will sooner or later deviate from the Truth.

God has not started a new religion, neither has He given another Bible. Bro. Branham stood between all the denominations and religious movements, preaching the true Word of God to call out a people for the LORD. Whatever he preached, must be seen in the proper connection with God's Word, whereunto nothing can be added or taken away. There has not been a time on earth, in which the plan of redemption was made known to such detail as now, but the enemy comes right behind to sow his seed of discrepancy (Mt. 13). We must not be distracted and perturbed by this, for thus it has been since the garden of Eden throughout the Old and the New Testament. Whenever true men of God came on the scene, impersonators followed. Even in the days of Paul, men were preaching perverse doctrines.

According to the Word of Christ, we are to let these things grow until the time of the harvest, when the grain of wheat will be separated from the tares. Until then, the rain falls upon both seeds - the just and the unjust; the sun shines upon the good and the evil.

The members of the body of Christ refrain from all private interpretations of the Word, visions or predictions. We preach the Word and leave the rest in the hands of Almighty God. If the LORD gives a vision or a promise, He alone will take care of it. He needs absolutely no one to go around to talk about it, for He Himself will bring it to pass. Whatever the LORD speaks or shows in a vision is solely His responsibility. He will disclose its meaning in His time and season.

Some feel that certain things Bro. Branham saw by vision are still outstanding. We must take into consideration, that sometimes natural things convey a spiritual meaning. Although prophets have spoken in the first person

of things that were to come to pass, they were not necessarily living at the time of the fulfilment thereof. Their visions, however, were "*THUS SAITH THE LORD!*"

While Peter was on the housetop, he had a peculiar vision. He saw all manner of four-footed beasts, creeping things, etc. - a very strange sight to behold. He was told, "*Kill and eat!*" The saying, "God means what He says and says what He means" only applies to the spiritual mind. The LORD frequently shows natural things in a vision to type out a spiritual significance. Peter didn't understand the meaning of his vision at first, but God gave the answer. He moves on both ends of the line (Acts 10).

Just think of what damage any carnal interpretation of that vision would have caused! What if he or others had spoken or preached about it? It was given to Peter for personal guidance.

When the LORD spoke to me on April 2, 1962 at sunrise about the storing up of the food and the oncoming famine, He named all kinds of groceries and vegetables such as potatoes, flour, oil, carrots, etc. We thought a natural famine was coming, not knowing that the Word of God speaks of such a famine in Amos 8: 11. We took the Words of the LORD literally and stored these groceries up.

I didn't understand the spiritual meaning until I met Br. Branham on December 3, 1962, and he told me by divine revelation that the famine was not a natural one, but a spiritual famine would come for the hearing of the Word of God. He told me that the food I was to store up is the revealed Word of God for this hour, which is kept on the tapes. God Himself will complete His work according to His divine plan. If only we could rest in Him and keep "*... looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...*" (Heb. 12: 2).

Let us proclaim the whole counsel of God, the full Gospel of the LoRD Jesus Christ, and serve Him with all our heart. Until Jesus comes, we shall preach salvation to the lost, healing to the sick and deliverance to those, who are bound and oppressed by the enemy. We shall baptise those who have accepted Christ and have repented of their sins, and pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit. We shall have the LORD's supper and observe the foot washing - do all His commandments.

Should you come in contact with individuals or groups, who have lost their balance, don't throw the precious Word aside. We don't do away with Peter simply because his statue was put up in the Vatican and millions idolise it by kissing its feet publicly. I just shook my head when I saw it, but went on praising the LORD for the great apostle, who was used of God in such a wonderful way.

Regrettably, some have gone overboard in regards to Bro. Branham. Let us not look upon that. Wherever God is at work, the enemy is overactive and tries to lure us away to distract our attention from what God is about to accomplish.

The LORD Jesus Christ must be the centre of our conversations, our singing, preaching and praying. He must have the pre-eminence in all things. He is the One walking amidst the seven golden lampstands. Although His servants and prophets are to be respected for the ministry and position He has placed them in, the LORD Jesus Christ alone deserves our admiration and adoration, our worship and our praise.

*"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (Jude 24-25).*

By His commission



The picture with the pillar of fire above the head of William Branham was taken in Houston, Texas, U.S.A., on the 24th of January, 1950. Because of the mysterious light above Rev. Branham's head in the negative, the film was sent from the Douglas Studio in Houston to Dr. George J. Lacy, 'Investigator of Questioned Documents' for the FBI. A microscopic examination and study was made of the entire surface of both sides of the film. George J. Lacy pronounced the negative to be absolutely genuine: **"I am of the definite opinion that the negative submitted for examination was not retouched nor was it a composite or double exposed negative. The light streak appearing above the head in a halo position was caused by light striking the negative."**