

# The *Contender*

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## Evidence, What Is It?, Part 1



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THIS IS A MESSAGE THAT BROTHER JACKSON WAS VERY CAREFUL TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING IN A WAY THAT SHOULD OVERRIDE ALL THOSE TRADITIONAL CONCEPTS THAT HAVE CAUSED BELIEVERS SO MUCH TROUBLE THROUGH THE YEARS.

Brothers and sisters, I am undertaking a message today, that I have never preached one like it. I have been asked many questions down through the years, and I have tried never to offend anyone that believes in the old Pentecostal evidence of speaking in tongues. I have felt that one of these days God would give me a message, and I would not just be using Acts 2:4, but I would be using a lot more than that. Any of you that take notes, do so, because we are going to give you a Bible picture of this. The title of it is, "Evidence, What Is It?" I looked up the word "evidence" in the dictionary. Evidence, what does it mean? Number one, it is used as proof, the second, it is something that tends to prove a point, it helps to establish the thing in question. There are a lot of scriptures we can use. I have enough to tell you, that this is a day in the old Pentecostal realm, and I am not belittling the old Pentecostal realm, they had their day, but the Pentecostal move that started at the turn of the century was

not the end of what God was going to do for His Bride Church. I am going to ask you to turn with me to Matthew's gospel. Many times we have adjusted to the tradition of asking, Have you received the baptism of the Holy Ghost? I received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and on and on. I want to prove to you today, when we come to the book of Acts, that the word baptism of the Holy Ghost, was not even mentioned. Now Bro. Jackson, don't shock me. Where did this word, baptism, come from? It comes from Matthew chapter 3, verses 11. We have become an element of people, at this closing hour of time, that are prone to carry a lot of tradition of what we have been taught through the years. Many times we never stop to actually compare it with the scriptures. Where did this word "baptism" come from? The word baptism means to be immersed, whether applicable to the Spirit or to water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we turn to Matthew 3, which is when the Pharisees sent out people to ask John who he was, and this is what he said, "I indeed baptize you with water (and he did, he immersed them, he did not sprinkle them) unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." That is the first time the word baptize, in that term, is mentioned. Verse 12. "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will

thoroughly purge His floor, (That is at the end time.) and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." We could actually say it is only mentioned one time in the chronology of the Bible because all gospel writers refer to the same incidence. Let us see what each one said. We will go to Mark, chapter 1. It is the same event, it is not a different event, this is just the way Mark records it. When the same ones came to ask John who he was, he began to explain who he was, and when we come to the 8th verse he said, "I indeed have baptized you with water: but He (meaning the one that shall come after me) shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." It is not two different events, it is one and the self same time. But we want to prove that each recorder of the gospel is referring to the same period of time. Let us go to Luke, the 3rd chapter, we are in the 16th verse. When Luke records how they came to ask John who he was, "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Now let us go to the gospel of John, 1st chapter. The reason I am reading this is to let everyone know, each one of these gospel writers, wrote it in the same term John spoke it. When they asked him who he was, verse 32, And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. (He is referring to Jesus the Christ) And I knew

Him not; but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” That is the last we see of that word being mentioned. When we go now to the book of Acts, when the Holy Ghost fell upon those disciples on the day of Pentecost, none of the writers in the book of Acts referred to it in that term. The reason I am looking at it from this standpoint, is because we must first find out what they did receive. Did they receive some byproduct of God? No. What is the Holy Ghost? It is the Spirit of God the Great Creator Himself. That Spirit dwelt in Jesus in the fulness of all His attributes. When we go to the 2nd chapter of Acts, here is where we begin to hear what really did take place on the day of Pentecost. My purpose this morning is not to mislead anyone, but when I look at the world of religion today, in the Gentile realm, there are thousands upon thousands of people the world over who do speak in tongues. The sad truth is, the greater percentage have no revelation whatsoever, pertaining to what God is doing for His Bride today. You could not get them to darken the door of this place. They think we are fanatics, that we are a cult, that we are all wrong. Yet they can brag, I have spoken in tongues, which they think is the initial evidence of being filled with the Spirit of God. We are going to look at this and see exactly what did take place on the day of Pentecost, and what did God do by manifesting the

tongues in the manner He did. We have a lot of traditional things we have carried around, that are not of God. Pay attention as I read this, “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” What put them in one accord? It was the fact that the one hundred and twenty sitting there in the upper room, had all been taught by the man called Jesus. They remembered, to the best of their knowledge, precisely what He had said. They were sitting there, all in agreement, as to what had been taught by Him. “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven (so this was manifested by a sound first, they heard something) as of a rushing mighty wind, (they did not guess at it, they heard it) and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, (It affects the sight also.) and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, (Why did the writer not say they were baptized with the Holy Ghost if that is the way we are supposed to use the term? How many catch the point? We are going to read all these scriptures, pertaining to the various groups where this event took place. Many times when you use the term baptism, meaning to immerse, yet you come out with the fact that they did not receive everything, because they got no revelation whatsoever. Yet we have used the term immersed, if you get immersed, you get wet. You know that. I am not trying to use these things to catch somebody, but to wake us up to the fact of how the

Bible is written, and of what God did do? When they saw those cloven tongues of fire, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, it does not say they were immersed with the Holy Ghost. The word (and) is a conjunction, it connects what has happened first, with something else that followed.) and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” This was the choice of God, which was that very Spirit that had come inside their vessels of clay. There were a hundred and twenty disciples sitting there, they heard something, then they saw something. I have to say, when the Spirit came inside those vessels, they also felt something. Why did they come into the streets staggering like drunk people and were actually referred to as drunk people? And they began to speak in other tongues. Verse 6, “Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, (or confused) because that every man heard them speak in his own language.” Now brothers and sisters, please give me your attention, this event had never been manifested in the history of Israel. You know that. No where in all of the history of Israel, had this kind of event ever occurred. Just imagine, a hundred and twenty people coming out of the upper room, staggering like they were drunk. That is what the home bunch said, oh, they are drunk on new wine. I will have to say, there was a certain amount of physical demonstration in the staggering, drifting around. When they began to ask the question of the apostles,

what is this, seeing we hear the wonderful things of God spoken in the language whereunto we were born. There were Jews from Rome, they knew Latin. There were Jews from Greece, that knew the Greek tongue. There were Jews from Egypt, that knew the Coptic language. Wherever they were from, about sixteen different nationalities around Israel, they all heard some of those local Galilean Jews speaking in that language where they had been born and raised up. That had never happened in the history of Israel, prior to this time. I will say, it has only happened periodically in many places throughout time, and God has done it to bear witness, as a confirmation. I am going slow, because I want to weigh my words. I just do not want anybody coming and asking me a question later. We are going to study every scripture that pertains to this experience, and learn exactly what it is that we receive. When we go to Acts the 8th chapter, this is where Philip went down to Samaria. Many of the Samaritans became believers, and accepted the Lord in baptism and so forth, but it plainly tells you this, but the Holy Ghost had not come upon any of them. When that word got back to Jerusalem, they sent Peter and John to Samaria to pray for those people. I will start with the 15th verse. “Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: For as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and

they received.” It does not say they were baptized. In acts 2:4, they were filled, here they received. It is talking about one and the self same thing. The reason I am doing this is to tear down tradition. Many times when everyone thinks that everybody has received the baptism, they come up short on a revelation, then I have to say, did they receive the baptism? Were they literally immersed? When we begin to study the scripture, what all the Holy Ghost was to do for you, we are going to see that a lot of people come up short. That is why so many are out there today, believing they have all they need. Look at the charismatic move the world over. Then there are a lot of Pentecostal people that say, oh well, they just have a devil. They no more have a devil than you have had a devil. They just got a little taste and they think that is all they need. I have to say, it is going to take more than just a little taste of the Spirit for anyone to wind up in the Bride of Christ, clothed in fine linen, and restored back to the same biblical picture that the early Church started out as. When we turn to that 17th verse, it says, “Then laid they their hands on them, and they received (didn’t say they were baptized) the Holy Ghost.”

### **GENTILES RECEIVE** **HOLY GHOST**

Let us go to the 10th chapter of Acts, in the 44th verse. Peter is at Cornelius’ house. He still looked back and could not understand why God had given him

that vision when he was at Joppa, to come up here. Cornelius had sent these men, so Peter has gone. We have a lot of ex-Catholics in here, you know what I am going to say now in this respect. No sooner did Peter and those that were with him come into the house, and that household of Greeks fell prostrate on the floor. Now if Peter was the first pope, do you think he would have said what he did? What did he say? Rise up we are just men like you are. Peter did not go for that heathenism and idolatry. He set an example for those popes that have been in office down through the centuries of time since then. Peter opened his mouth to speak, still wondering, Lord, why did you lead me here? It was all a mystery to him. He just began to preach Jesus to those Gentiles. In the 44th verse, “While Peter yet spake these words.” He did not have to ask, do you understand? It was while he spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on them. It was not written, have you received, have you been filled? It fell. The reason I am saying this, let us stop using traditional terms, what it is, what it is not. Many times that is confusing, when you say the foolish virgins received something. I do not mean that they receive another spirit, I do not mean that they received a clod in their pocket, I just want to say, if we get the tradition out of our minds, we ought to know what we are talking about. I say this, because of a long letter I received from the

Philippines. I could tell he was a nice, educated fellow. Over and over he was trying to say, what do you mean by your phrase, they received something. If we are talking about the Holy Ghost, we are still talking about it, whether it is filled, fell, anointed, or what. How many understand? “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell (it didn’t say they were filled, immersed, baptized, or what, no, it fell on them) on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision (the Jews that were with Peter) which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Poured out) For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” It was necessary in the beginning of the church age, God had a specific reason that tongues would stand out as an audible sign, that He had given His Spirit to these people. You will hear me explain this, and understand it by the time we get finished. Now let us go on to chapter 19. 1st verse, “And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, (they had become believers by the ministry of Apollos, but Apollos did not have the revelation that Paul had.) He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? (He did not say, have you been baptized with the Holy Ghost, did he? I am not trying to be

fanatical, but to be practical. Let us learn how to use the terms.) And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? (He was not talking about the Spirit: he was talking about in water.) And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost (It does not say fell, it came) it came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” I have a specific reason for reading these individual words. I now want to say something, so I am going to go back to the other parts of this 18th chapter. Brothers and sisters, the time may come your way, so do not just sit in the pew and listen to a sermon, then go home and say, my, that was a wonderful sermon. I ask, Could you explain it to anyone? Did you learn anything at all? It is important that we learn who we are in life, and why we are what we are. I have heard this saying, well a woman is not supposed to preach. That is a fact. But does that mean she is to follow her husband like a puppy dog. Let me illustrate how that would be, the wife is supposed to follow her husband, but keep her mouth shut. So he

is going here and going there, and she is following along, but an issue comes up, and she just stands there, listening. I have a reason for saying this. We are going back up to the 18th verse in the 18th chapter. "And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; (a husband and wife) having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: (Who did he leave? Aquila and Priscilla.) but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. (Let us go to the 24th verse) And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man (Notice now, he was a Jew well instructed in the scriptures of the Law.) was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, (Now, you denominational preachers, listen to this.) they (not one, they) took him (Took who? Apollos.) unto them, and

expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." Now that is common sense. Sisters, when you meet somebody in the pathway of life, and they do bring up a subject, they are hungry to know something about, and if you feel in your heart that you have light on certain scriptures and what they mean, then don't let that old saying, women are not supposed to preach, prevent you. No, you are not to preach, but you can give testimony to truth you have heard. God will help you. It is pathetic, here is Aquila and Priscilla, (they) took him, yes but I don't think Priscilla said anything. Aquila did all the talking. You can never prove that. They, both, invited him, it means both of them have been brought up under Paul's teachings and affected by it. They have a revelation and understanding, so each one of them knew exactly how to say certain things to help Apollos see the truth. That is where Apollos got straightened out. But a woman is not supposed to preach. She is not to preach, because when you stand before a congregation of people, you do it as a leader, but if you take somebody in your home or somewhere to give testimony to them, and explain a point of scripture that is beneficial to their understanding, that is not preaching and being a leader. That is being a witness. Don't come back and ask me, well Bro. Jackson, don't you think? I have spoken it. How many know what I meant? Let us now go back to Acts, the 4th chapter.

This is a little after the day of Pentecost, another event has come about. They are beginning to hear some bad things that have taken place, so the believers are gathered in a certain place. In the 23rd verse it says, "And being let go, they went to their own company, (in a place where they could go and assemble themselves) and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them." Here is where they opened their mouths and began to pray as a united body. As they were praying, we will go to the 29th verse, here is their prayer. "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken (That would scare the liver out of a lot of people, if this house would shake, oh, it is an earthquake. Well it could be the power of God.) where they were assembled together; and they were all filled (not baptized) with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." This was another anointing. It is just a refreshing. That is the reason I read it. No place in the book of Acts, can you find baptism referring to the receiving of the Holy Ghost. Let us learn how to use scriptures in a proper relationship, lest we come to where we will wish we had. Now we are going back to the day of

Pentecost in Acts 2. I am not just trying to be smart, so please do not take this that way. As I said to start out, the speaking in tongues manifested here on the day of Pentecost, had never been manifested in all the history of Israel up until this time. When this event did take place, and Peter stood up and began to explain what this was, I want to remind you that we need to see if we are really up to date on how we read our Bible. Did you know, when they came forward and began to ask Peter and them, men and brethren, what must we do, Peter had already preached to them what this was. Notice, nowhere did he say that this manifestation of what they have heard in other languages, was mentioned in the prophecy of Joel. It is not, but Peter did refer to the prophecy of Joel. When you read it, he said it like this, this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, and it shall come to pass in the last days, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, your sons and daughters shall prophesy, old men shall dream dreams, young men shall see visions. Please show me if anywhere in Joel, he ever said they will speak with other tongues. Well Bro. Jackson, you are confusing me. I am not confusing you. Peter had a reason for stating it in this manner, because he was not ignorant of scripture. That is why I am preaching it this morning. Let us get ourselves familiar with the scriptures and pay attention to how they are written and what is meant. When Peter said this

is that, he was one of them that has been speaking in this other dialect, and he also knew that this was prophesied in Isaiah, chapter 28. Let us go there. Peter knew how to connect this event, or this experience, with the event in Joel. As I read this, I ask that we all take a look at the denominational world of religion. I have been in the Church of Christ, I have been in the Methodist, and I am thankful to God for truth. He does not just hit you over the head with truth, He will allow many things to come into your life's pathway to draw your attention to certain things that will get you to begin to wonder, am I really where I am supposed to be with the Lord? Isaiah prophesied, some seven hundred years before it ever came about, so let us read the 8th verse of the 28th chapter in Isaiah. "For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean."

### **ETERNAL SECURITY**

Look at the denominational church world today. When you step inside, about all the congregation will hear is John 3:16, which has been used so many times, it has lost its meaning. Well, I believe in Jesus, sure you do, but there is more to it than just believing in Jesus, a lot more. There are scriptures in here, that will really tell what He has done for you, so you must ask, Has He really come into my life to give me something that will help me throughout my life? The Holy Spirit is not only a Spirit that

can cause one to speak in another language, Jesus refers to Him in one place as the Comforter. Well, I don't need a Comforter, I listen to my preacher. Then you do not even know what that term, Comforter, actually means. When you have received the genuine Holy Spirit in your life, some of these days ahead, the devil will throw you a hay maker. When you begin to look at yourself and the world around you, how many times have I heard people question their experience, or even ask, am I even a child of God? Well brothers and sisters, if we have received the Holy Spirit, lo, I am with you always, not just for today, or to the next time a problem comes up, and then He leaves you: He is with you from then on. When Jesus said, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, that is exactly what He meant, or to the end of your life, whichever comes first. It is absolutely necessary, that we understand the Holy Ghost is not just a Comforter, but a guide to guide you through trials and tests. The devil throws things at you and you say, oh I just need a lot of prayer, I just need this. One thing we do need, is that Comforter. Sometimes we have to rely only on Him. When everything about us is going wrong, it is then that we begin to rely on that which is within us, God has His way of using other instruments to comfort and strengthen and encourage us, but we also have to learn how to rely on what

we have inside us. Because if we begin to reach out first and we cannot acknowledge what we have received inside, then we forget how He can be a comforter. When God said, For all tables are full of vomit, He gets so tired of this Sunday after Sunday, the same kind of sermons, repetition, now they have gone to having dances on Saturday night for young people who don't have sense enough to keep rings out of their ears and out of their tongues. I have to say it is pathetic. They don't need a dance, they need the grace of God to touch their lives and change their attitudes, otherwise they are just going on down the devil's pathway, led by the devil, talking like the devil, looking like the devil, and acting like the devil. I am not mad, but when you see some of this as you walk down Broadway, you see it, you look at it, there it goes. I can remember when human beings did not act like many do now. What has caused it? Don't tell me some back sliding preacher did it, it was not that: a bunch of low down politicians and educators said it is not wrong to do this, you don't have a right to condemn this. Well then go on and look like an animal. That is why they live and act like one and even talk like one. All tables are full of vomit, so that there is no place clean. He is talking in that hour about the spiritual things of Israel, their feast days which were to be fulfilled with a holy attitude of giving praise to God, giving thanks to

Him for what He has done for them. But no, every festivity has become a place filled with filth, no sincerity whatsoever. Verse 9 "Whom shall He teach knowledge? (There are very few today that you can teach knowledge to.) and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? (I have heard the Charismatics say, we don't need that: that divides. Well, it is supposed to) them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. (They are still sucking on a bottle. Some of those sixty five year old fellows still have a pacifier stuck in their mouth, in a figurative sense.) For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; (This is exactly why John came along preaching what he did, then Jesus came along and for three years preached what He did. He laid down the true path, precept upon precept.) line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: (Now here is the prophecy of what happened on the day of Pentecost.) For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people." What people is he talking about, seven hundred years before it took place? Jews. They observed the Sabbath, they kept the day of atonement, they keep all those holy rituals, but when they were done, they were ready to go back to the same old carnal activity they had done the previous year. That is why God had to speak to them that way. So when this prophecy was brought down, when the Holy Ghost fell on them that

day in the Upper Room, this was the first time that had been expressed. That one hundred and twenty standing there in the streets of Jerusalem, staggering, jabbering, and I will say this, I have seen men so drunk they could not talk any other way. They would try to talk, but they could not speak plain, their mind was jumbled. That is what those people saw and heard that day. That was not all they saw in those people. When they saw these, they could not help but hear the wonderful works of God spoken to them in a language wherein they were born. It had never happened before. My point is, it was prophesied that speaking in tongues was to be definitely a prophetic sign that God has fulfilled His promise of Isaiah 28, when He did give the promise of the outpouring by the prophet Joel. That is the first time it had been spoken and the way it was manifested. That is how we have to get the scriptures balanced. I have to say, all through the book of Acts, I have no doubt in my mind, when the Holy Ghost did fall on the groups from the Jew to the Gentile, that speaking in tongues was a sign, but let us stop saying it is initial evidence. You take what you heard to court; and you will be asked, Where is the smoking gun? That is the initial evidence. Do you understand me? If you do not have a smoking gun, then you have no evidence, you just have an assumption. A man is dead, you can see the bullet that killed him, but where is the gun?

Until you find that gun, you cannot point the finger at anyone, can you? Let us stop using this thing of evidence, because it is going to get some in a trap here in the end time. I am going to prove it to you by the Bible, by showing how it reads. I will say this, right here in the end time as God is restoring His Church back to its original likeness, all these gifts that are mentioned in Ephesians are going to be manifested, cultivated and cherished, but we are going to have some character, and some leadership to go along with it. There are a lot of them out there today, that can speak in tongues, but they are no more led by God than that bunch of crows out there in the corn field. You know it. If they were truly filled with the Holy Ghost, like they are supposed to be, you could not keep them away from truth. Instead, they are satisfied just to sit somewhere, cold, dead, and ready to argue at the drop of a hat. "For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people. (That is exactly what happened on the day of Pentecost.) To whom He said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear." That bunch of Galilean Jews just walked away that day saying, they are just drunk on new wine. It meant nothing to the home bunch of Jews: they could only speak the Galilean dialect, but these visiting Jews out of every nation could speak dual languages. They heard this

said to them in their language. They heard the word of God, and they understood it. When Peter got finished, here they came and said, explain this to us? That is not what they said at all. They said, Men and brethren, what must we do? Peter said, repent every one of you. Well, I am a Jew, I keep the Sabbath. Repent every one of you. Well, I keep the Law, I keep the Sabbath. Repent every one of you and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. That is a promise to come. Notice how these terms were used. Let us try to refresh our minds, concerning the terms the apostles spoke in, and at the time it was used. With this in mind, go with me to St. John chapter 6. Jesus, all through the gospel of John, began to drop off little indicators, things to prepare the disciple for the day when He would leave. This was His way of showing them, it is important that you receive that which I speak of, in the future.

### **FOOLISH VIRGINS**

I want to say at this time, some will say the foolish virgins did not have anything, look back in your Bible. I beg you, look back in your Bible. I am going to start reading what Jesus said in the 44th verse. “No man can come to me, (What did He mean by that? No man can be saved.) except the Father (Which is this Father? It is the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit. His first and foremost work

in your life is to draw you from sin unto repentance and then on into a true relationship.) which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (Now He refers back to Isaiah) It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, (by the Holy Spirit, been convicted by the Holy Spirit, the purpose is that in the end he will submit and comes unto Him) cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.” Now what does that tell me? You don’t just up and come to Christ on your own terms, when you want to, when it is convenient. You can work for six months, well, on a certain date, I am going to go and give my heart to God. It might not work that way. That is your planning. I can say this, many times you will put off and put off, bingo, God will hit you one day and knock you down. You are laying there crying, Lord, have mercy on me. No man can come to me, for what? Salvation. Except he be drawn. Now let us go to the 13th chapter. Here is where we begin to talk about one of the attributes of the Holy Spirit, it is love. Paul taught it in the Corinthian letter in the 13th chapter. Love believeth all things, love endureth all things, love is not puffed up, so on and so forth. You may not think these little scriptures mean a lot, but if you look at the depth of what they are pointing to in your own

personal life, if we really allow the Holy Spirit to get hold of us and lead us, you will find that they are very essential. Jesus said this, (John 13:34) “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, (That is as clear to me as the sun shining outside. I am to love my brothers and sisters in the Lord. That is from a divine relationship, I will not see big I and little you: I have to see each one of you as a child of God, doing your utmost to learn and walk with God in your own personal relationship.) that ye also love one another. By this (by what?) shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” That goes deep. Some might say, but he don’t believe like I do. Well just be a little patient. Maybe you have been in this way a long time, but now you want others to understand just as much as you do in six months, and you have been here six years. Think about it. This is a sign. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” It is not the rich over the poor. It matters not, whether you are penniless or you have a billion dollars, it is still absolutely necessary that you be saved, whether you have any worldly possessions or not. It is God’s love, that caused Jesus to take your and my place at Calvary. That love for others has got to be in our heart, and not because of personality. That divine love is part of the character that the Holy Ghost has to

mold in us. There is a lot of tongue talking people out there in the world of religion today, but they have no more love for truth than a hound dog, and the only kind of people they have love for are those of their own click. If you go here with them, if you go there with them, it is all a click. If you try to get them to understand the depth of some scriptures, they are not interested. However we must realize that some of them have to have something, or they could not be called virgins. It is necessary, that we understand what Jesus said about the Holy Ghost? He will teach you all things. He did not say maybe so, hope so, He shall teach you all things. Now brothers and sisters, that nails it down and clinches it. That is His objective in my life and your life, to teach us all things. It was not the Church of Christ that saved me. It was not Methodism that saved me. I am saved by the grace of God. He would not let me sit in that old dead, traditional stuff forever. He began to put a hunger in my heart. A lot of questions came up. I had a lot of feelings in my soul, what about this and that? When those things began to stimulate your inner being to reach out there and talk to people about certain things, it is the Holy Spirit’s purpose to take you and teach you all things. When you forget, He will bring to your remembrance. So don’t say, I forgot. It is His purpose to make you remember, even what you heard five years ago.

What is wrong with it? That is why, when my wife and I began to go to the Tabernacle years ago, and I heard Bro. Branham come out with Serpent Seed doctrine, the first Sunday morning he hit a little point on that, my, my, that old Methodist head of mine began to go into a spin. I thought, I have never heard that before. I did not know that serpent walked on two legs and feet just like man. I did know that he communicated with a vocal voice, but I sure did not know he did such a diabolical thing as that. I thought, Lord, one morning in February 1952, you sat me down on the couch and I read the first chapter of Luke's writing. I saw that you were going to send that spirit of Elijah in the last days to turn the end time Gentile children back to the faith of our apostolic fathers. I can never forget it. I said to myself, Lord, I am going to keep my mouth shut until I know what I believe, and until I know what I am listening to. I just put that in my filing cabinet. That filing cabinet that God wants each of you to have, do not set it in a junk yard: it is going to be important one of these days. If, when certain things sound mysteriously strange to you, and you say, well I don't see it that way, just file it away: do not discard it. I promise you, if you have a sincere heart and attitude, one of these days God will see you in the right frame of mind; and He will bring to your remembrance what you heard and what you filed away. He

will bring that right down into your memory and you will take a look at it and say, well now I see: why did I not see that before? It is now just as real to you as your hands and feet. So the Holy Spirit is more than something that can talk through you in another language. He is given to you to be a comforter, and He is going to lead your life. No, not to make a good Methodist out of you. You do not have to go to glory wearing a label like that, I am this or that. The main thing is, you are a child of God. You are saved by the grace of God. It is by the grace of God that any of us ever amount to anything. I pray that you know what I am talking about. As we come on down toward the end of this, verse 37, "Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice." Peter did not have the Holy Spirit when he said that. It is a good thing that none of the other disciples were around nearby to hear Jesus say that, they might have said, I don't care if he does get the Holy Ghost, he will never be saved, just because he made that derogatory statement. How many understand? It is not how many times we let certain little issues affect us in our judgment at times, God knows who and what we are. Go with me now to the 14th chapter, 21st verse. I want to read this

with respect, and with kindness. When Jesus said this, He was speaking something that is going to go deep into our mentality. “He that hath my commandments, (He is not talking about the Law.) and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: (That is the way it was in the days of the early Church. They all continued steadfastly in the apostles teaching. They went from house to house in that same frame of thought and mind, praying, worshipping, fellowshiping, they were in unity. It is only when somebody comes along that is out of unity with them, when he thinks he has a revelation that needs to be inserted. He it is that keeping my commandments is he that loveth me. You cannot keep the things that you know are right, and turn right around and begin to deny the Lord.) and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” If He is going to manifest Himself, it literally means He is going to come into us with the Holy Spirit. Because He is going to be inside of us as a teaching Spirit, as a revelatory Spirit, and as a comforting Spirit, and it is going to affect our character. Yet only God knows the thousands of people around the world today, that have come through the Pentecostal revivals and have spoken in tongues, and they wind up with no more character and stability than many out in the world. Why did they bypass the prophet to the age, why

did they not have an ear to hear? It was not a revelation to them. They are content to be just exactly what they are. They said, I have all I need. So it goes to show, something has happened through time that changed the whole structure from what it was in the apostolic days.

### **HOW GOD LEADS US**

I realize the type of message we are on may not sound too appealing to a lot of Pentecostal people. But when this race is all over and the Bride of Christ has been taken, there is going to be a lot of tongue talking people left in this world, wondering, where are we? I have to say, a lot of people think they can play games with God. You don't play games with God. When He gave to you a gift of Himself, He gave it with the potential that we allow Him to lead us. There are a lot of Pentecostal people, from the beginning of the 19th century, or the 20th century, call it whatever you want to, there is the trinity Pentecost, you could never change them to believe in water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for anything. Yet they claim to have the Holy Ghost with the initial evidence. Then when the time did come that God began to speak to people, I have read testimony after testimony, how that when God began to speak to people concerning taking on water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus, that in itself was as much of an experience to that person, as speaking in tongues had been at another time. Yet

the Pentecostal movement became split, all over the trinity side and the oneness side. They have looked at each other down through the last one hundred years, fussing and stewing, and nothing could change them. You could not get them out of their system of religion for anything in the world. You are going to have to come up with a justifiable answer one of these days, why don't they meet the requirements found in other scriptures? Go back with me to St. John, chapter 14, 21st verse. Earlier where it said, he that hath my commandments, that is not the Law, and keepeth them, observes them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him. What was He talking about? He was talking about being filled with the Holy Spirit. Now in the 23rd verse He said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: (There are a lot of words in the Bible that neither side believe in. You know that.) and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (How? Through being filled with the Holy Spirit.) He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: (His sayings is not a bunch of tradition. They are just as real as real can be.) and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. (Because He was a physical man. Notice what He said,

pointing to the hour when the Holy Spirit would come.) But the Comforter, (That is what He is) which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, (Well Bro. Jackson, you see, we have to have the right meaning.) and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." There is not a thing in this book where He intends to leave your mind, spiritually speaking, blank. It is all in there for your growth in the Lord. Don't ever think I am speaking against speaking in tongues, to anyone that has received that kind of experience. But please remember, that is only the beginning of something. The Holy Spirit in you, is going to do a lot more than that. That is only a sign that He came. It is not the initial evidence, we are going to prove it. Remember, the Church did not lose it all in one day or one year's time. She lost certain things gradually. Then in process of time when God began to restore the things back to the church, He had every right to restore things the way He wanted to, to accomplish His end time purpose. How it started with Israel was one thing. But how He winds it up with the Gentiles is going to be another thing. Now when we go to St. John 16, I am bringing these scriptures out because they are not put in there by Jesus as saying them just for nought. We are starting in the 13th verse. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, (He will not reveal something to you,

that is not truth. He will guide you into all truth. That is His positive objective. He will guide you into all truth. The denominations have absolutely put a gate to this, that they open and shut at will.) for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you.” Sure, the gifts are one thing, they are signs, but they are not altogether the sole evidence, because if it does not develop a character and understanding in you, you can wind up like a foolish virgin. Because the wise virgins are going to be clothed in fine linen. If you want to look at the type back in Leviticus when the Law was made, and then the tabernacle was built, in the tabernacle there was a certain holy place wherein the ark of the covenant and the table of shewbread and so forth was set. When that ark was to sit on that, it was not set open and visible to the entire tabernacle. There was a little room called the Holy of holies, and that was enclosed by curtains of linen. That had a type. God will reveal Himself only behind that kind of understanding. So if that was the type in the natural, that is what God is going to wind up abiding behind, inside of these lively stones, when the people themselves carry a revelation, and understanding. It builds character. Just to speak in tongues is not being a light unto the world. It is the life you live,

how you treat fellow man, how you carry on dealings with fellow man, without allowing yourself to become like them. Verse 15, “All things that the Father hath are mine: (That is the attributes, that is the manifestation of the Spirit, everything it takes to build character. Because God Himself is not a man, but in Him is all these characteristics, and attributes that were exemplified in the person we call Jesus. That is why God was manifested in the Son, through the manifestation of these attributes. Because it built a character in Jesus.) therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.” Now brothers and sisters, let us go to 1st Corinthians. All of these scriptures are very familiar. In the 12th chapter, Paul explains the different gifts, nine of them. But in the 13th chapter, he is speaking to a Gentile church, and many of their former lives have been wrapped up in paganism, heathen worship. It takes a good while for the Holy Spirit in them to begin to develop a character and attitude and expression of the love that the apostle Paul is trying to get them to look at. He says in the 1st verse, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, (love) I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” Now where is the evidence then? Come on, where is the evidence? Though I have the gift of prophecy and so forth, and have no love, I am nothing. The reason I go this route is to try and

show, we should desire spiritual gifts, that is a necessity for the body of Christ. But when that is the only thing we seek after, and we do not allow the grace of God to develop character, the motive of why we want to do certain things, and conduct ourselves certain ways is vain. "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor." You can give to the Red Cross, you can give to every kind of charity organization there is, that looks good to society, but in the eyes of God it does not cause your name to be written down in the book of life. But when we come over here to the 4th verse, he is dealing with human character. He says, "Charity (love) suffereth long, (It learns to look at problems in other people's lives, or situations that you might be confronted with, it causes you to look at things with a lot of patience and longsuffering. Don't fly off the handle all of a sudden.) and is kind; charity (love) envieth not; (There are a lot of people who cannot stand to see brother John get something new and them not have something like it, or better. That is covetousness. That can also lead to jealousy. There are people who let that rule their life. If you come up with something they do not have, it is not long until they ask, where did you get that? They go head over heels in debt just to get that, because they cannot stand to see you have something they do not have.) charity vaunteth not itself, (It does not lift itself up) is not puffed up,

Doth not behave itself unseemly, (There are people that absolutely get the idea, if I can't be the star, if I can't be number one in the crowd, I will keep going until I find a crowd where I can be number one. That rules a lot of people.) seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, (Sometimes you hear some very bad expressions about you, but that does not mean you go home and cry, oh, they just treat me so terrible. Sometimes God is going to let these things come our way, because it is His way to develop some character in us, patience, longsuffering. We get to the place where we do not let those things bother us. Well I can't help it, I was just born that way. Yes, you were born a sinner, but the grace of God came to change that. Even if you were born upside down, you are going to be required to walk upright on your feet and grow up with a level head. Seeketh not her own and is not easily provoked, all this is pertaining to your character. Because, when the Holy Spirit comes into us, that is the gift of God to cultivate within us, from within us outward, the hidden man that you cannot see, but that is another likeness of Jesus Christ. Not easily upset, provoked, made angry.) thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, (lawlessness, disobedience) but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, (that does not mean you believe all the lies you hear, we need to have sense enough to know, that what we are listening to, maybe might not be

truth) hopeth all things, (always hoping for the better side of things) endureth all things.” Puts up with, tolerates a lot of things, it might not make you feel very good at the time, but when you can develop an inward attitude that God approves, He will take care of it all in time. Love, the supreme ultimate behavior we allow the Lord to cultivate in us, never fails. That testimony of love projected and shown forth will stand head and shoulders taller than all the other speeches and talks we make, trying to convince other people we are something. It never fails. “But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; (Now if you listen to the Church of Christ, they will tell you that all of that disappeared back then. Well I have a reason, and I will not get this message finished tonight, when we do end this message, I want you to know, it is going to wind up with gifts in the Church, but it is going to wind up with a church body that is in unity and of character. The Church is absolutely going to be the exemplification of Jesus Christ manifested through the body, in a lost and dying world. They are going to give this world the last testimony of Christianity they will ever get.) whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” That don’t mean that God meant it to vanish out of the body of Christ. But when people begin to try and specialize and project that as the whole

thing, it is not the whole thing. If that becomes the motive, without character being behind it, then God will not honor that. He will let a lot of that fall back and slap us in the face. “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. (In the Branham movement, now they are saying this.) But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” So they say since the prophet has come and brought a revelation, they have the perfect thing, so they sit down to be cured out in the sun, just like green corn. I was talking to a man the other day, he lives south of here. When I was in Shreveport, I remember meeting him, but I didn’t know where he went to. He called me and told me his name, and said, Bro. Jackson, I met you when you were in Shreveport. I said yes, I remember that now. He began to go back through the years of what has been going on, what has happened to the movement, he said, Bro. Jackson, where are people today? He said, Bro. Branham spoke of the restoration of the gifts and things. I just let him talk. He said, all I can see is fussing, squabbling, arguing among all the followers of Bro. Branham, this quote and that quote. He said, I get so discouraged sometimes, it makes me wonder, what can I believe? When he got to the place where I thought I could interrupt, I said, brother, there has been a moving of the Spirit to restore some of the gifts. From 1994 until about 1997,

we had a moving of the Spirit here in our congregation and some of the assemblies that are in fellowship with us also. Some from Canada came down and it spread off into those groups. We sent videos to Africa and the Philippines and it went there. Oh, it did? I said, yes. Then he said, well what do you think about the Middle East, I said brother, there is going to be a war in the Middle East, and Bro. Branham never said anything about it. When I began to talk to him about certain scriptures and how they line up, he said, let me write that down. I started out with Zechariah 12, Micah 7, Zephaniah 2, Ezekiel 25, Isaiah 19, I said, now you line these up. He said, oh my, I have to call you again and talk with you again. That is just what he said, I had already talked with him about fifty or fifty five minutes. That was Thursday afternoon while we were getting ready to come to church. I said, I am going to have to hang up, it is time for us to leave for our church service. Oh Bro. Jackson, I am going to call you again, I want you to send me some tapes. I just thought after that, a movement that heard what they heard should be up the road in the Bible, but they are sitting in the road, seasoning out, and they have never been made perfect at all. I have to say, brothers and sisters, that is a sad thing.

### **GAINING STATURE**

Now let us look at this thing of character. You cannot have character without some manifestations of the Spirit of God to go with it. Turn with me to Romans. Paul, the same one who wrote 1st Corinthians 13, said in verse 1 of chapter 8, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, (That is through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or being filled with the Spirit) who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." He is literally saying, the number one priority, He comes into you to mold and develop character within you. Number two, but at the same time He is going to be a teaching Spirit in us. God does not intend for us to get to one place and graduate, I know all I am supposed to know now. It is necessary that we begin to grow in knowledge and in wisdom, and in the grace of God. I have to say there are a lot of people today, if they had to defend this faith, they would not even know where to start. They would not know how to defend it, if they were challenged in a public way. I am not saying to go down the street with a sign portraying what you believe, what you know and what everybody else doesn't know. But if we are going to be a shining light, it is not how much noise we make, it is the character that we project. I have to believe there comes a time in your life, where God wants to deal with you and lead you in certain things pertaining many times to your individual life. Let me say this, if you are truly a born again, Holy Spirit filled person, and you are desiring that the Holy Spirit lead you in

life, regardless of whether you have a business, or what, there will come a time God is going to lead you in that very thing. You need His help in those times. I look back to the years that I farmed, how many times I have come to a place, I would have a decision to make, and it seemed like as I prayed and meditated and thought on the problem, Lord, I need help in this, and before very long something would develop, He would either force me into a corner where I would be compelled to make a decision, or He would give me a dream and I would know what to do. I know through the years, even after I started the church down in New Albany, I really never thought that it would last and come to this. I just thought, well, I will start it, maybe it will last four or five years, and God will let it pass. But as I kept on farming, and after awhile I began to see it was growing, not getting smaller. I began to become concerned, one of these days I am going to have to decide, which it is, what do I do? Do I keep farming, or what? One particular year I began to realize, I have to withdraw from this occupation so that I can spend more time giving my heart to the Lord in prayer. In the spring of the year, I was planning on doing a very small amount. A neighbor called me one day and said, Raymond, could I rent you my place this year, he told me the conditions he would rent it to me. It all sounded good, it was very close by. I thought, this is a good offer. I thought about it, I prayed about it, I wrestled with the decision for several days. I realized I had to make a

decision. The Lord gave me a dream. You would think in the dream He gave me, what would that mean to rent somebody else's farmland. Having been out west and traveled through the mountains, especially Wolf Creek Pass, I had a dream and saw myself in a trip through the mountains. As I topped the mountain pass and went through, starting down the other side, all of a sudden I began to touch the brake because I could see a long curve in front of me. As my car began to approach that curve, my brake pedal went to the floor. I thought, Lord, what is happening? Then the momentum began to pick up. There was a wall of rock along the side. As I thought about that, if I go over that curve, I am going to wind up in the bottom of a canyon, in a wreck. As I got closer to the curve, I had to do something quick. Just before I actually came to that curve, in haste I said, I will wreck against this rock wall before I go over that curve. You know, I just turned the car into that rock wall and it felt like that rock wall became a big glob of rubber, I ran into it and could feel the car come to a stop. It so scared me, I woke up with my heart pounding. I came to church, a sister in the church back then came up to me and said, Bro. Jackson, I had a dream about you last night, I don't know what it means, but I dreamed you were having to make a serious decision. I knew what it was. So I called the man and said, just go ahead and rent to somebody else. I realized that was a natural thing, but it doesn't matter whether you are in business or what, as

long as you are living for God and you bring every aspect about your life in relationship to serving the Lord, it doesn't matter whether you run a dairy, a beef herd, or what, all these things, if you are seeking to serve the Lord in life, He is going to take it seriously for you. He looks ahead for you. That is why many times we have to depend on Him. When you talk like that to the denominational world, oh, they think that is fanaticism. But to me, it is reality. It is just as real as stepping outside to see the sun shining. When you know you are a child of God, you have received His Holy Spirit into your life, you are depending on Him to help you, not only to grow spiritually, but to help you in all your other activities in life, He is going to be right there to help you. That is why, when we come over to the 14th verse, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they (plural) are the sons of God." When you preach these things some times to a denominational realm of people, they don't know what you are talking about. Well, I have never been led like that. Then you don't know how to commit all things into the hand of the Lord for Him to lead you. You just have a traditional belief, that satisfies you, and you sit down. You are not earnestly asking God to lead you and direct you. Go with me now, and let us look at this thing called character, in 2nd Peter chapter 1, when Peter is speaking and writing this epistle, he is definitely dealing in this first chapter about what we, being believers, children of God, are to do as we look at our lives. I realize, if

you preach this to a lot of denominational people, and you say, if you are once saved and really saved, and filled with the Holy Spirit, you will always be saved. Oh no, they say, I believe you can backslide. Well sinners don't backslide. How many know what I mean by that? When Peter wrote this epistle, we pick it up in verse 4, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these (these what? Promises) ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption (the dirty lifestyles of the sinful life that the world lives) that is in the world through lust. (Excess) And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; (What is virtue? It means the state of being right. Only the grace of God can help you attain that. But when we look in Revelation 22, the tree of life there, bore twelve manners of fruits. That is when mortality has been swallowed up in immortality. Then the believers will bear twelve manners, one of them is virtue. It is the state of being right, clean, holy in the eyes of God, because He has made you that way. Until we are saved, we don't know how to be right.) and to virtue knowledge; (Don't tell me anymore, I can't remember all this. God wants us to grow in knowledge and in the grace of God.) And to knowledge temperance; (That is to know when enough is enough. That is why I said the other night, if you like a little ham once in awhile, go ahead and eat it, it isn't going to hurt you. But know when enough is enough, because it is a fact,

too much pork in some people's lives is not good for your health. Maybe your physical being is not capable of actually consuming that type of meat. I read in the Reader's Digest, and I talked to a Jewish rabbi, here is what he said to me when I told him about what the medical profession said in Reader's Digest, how that Muslim women and Judiastic women that did not eat pork, have less female problems in the realm of cancer, than any other race of people. That should tell you something, shouldn't it? Then you can come along and say, then the Law is right. You didn't hear me. I am going to challenge you when you hear me. How are you going to go to a country that is starving to death and tell them not to eat pork. They will eat anything. How many hear me? Temperance is knowing when enough is enough. That is my business.) and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; (all of this pertaines to character, if you look at it in the right way) And to godliness (That is when somebody can look at you and watch your life, your character, your conduct, how you do things, sooner or later they are going to have to say, that is a godly person.) brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness (love) charity. (That is the utmost.) For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful (I like that. So we are required to allow the grace of God, the Spirit of God, to guide us in life, to help us cultivate these things, that they may grow, that our lives, our whole character, can become

molded in the likeness of Christ. In the likeness of Christ doesn't mean you comb your hair like you think He combed His. No, it is the character that projected from the person He was.) in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." I have to say, when the Holy Spirit comes in, He can come in with many manifestations and signs, but that is just the beginning of something He comes to do, that is to mold in you the likeness of Jesus Christ. Verse 9, "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." Ye shall never backslide, ye shall never quit the fellowship, you will always be right there to be a part of the body of Christ. Well, I think I am going to take a trip. There is nothing wrong in taking a trip, but I have to say, if we get to the place that we would rather be on Pike's Peak with a set of field glasses, looking out over the view, than we would to be in fellowship with believers, we are not fruitful in anything. We are living for ourselves. When you live for yourself, you are not living for God. Don't kid yourself. He is not coming for that kind of people, unless first He takes a two by four and knocks you over the head with it. Oh, He wouldn't do that. Oh yes, He will. I knew a man years ago, that said, I was so stubborn and rebellious against the will of God, one night in a dream, I was literally being beat with a fencepost.

I was pleading, don't, don't, don't. He woke up out of that and realized what was wrong. He needed to change his attitude. God has His way of dealing with you. That is why I have to say, He will even bring you within an inch of your life. Old Hwy. 31, I will never forget the place as long as I live, He put a mark on my face, I know, He don't make you, He just makes you willing. When He makes you willing, then you want to, and you are going to love like His Word says. You are not going to try to hold back, you are going to say, Lord, give me more, I want to follow you. Eternal security is right there, once saved, always saved. But you have to be a person that is sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit to have the promised benefit, and know why He is in you. You don't put Him off in a corner somewhere and go ahead and live your life the way your flesh wants to live it. Let us go back to Ephesians. How many times have we read this? When the apostle Paul felt led to write this, he was not only looking at the Church that was then, but he was looking at the Church, the body of Christ, for all times. He speaks of how God has set a certain kind of ministry within the body of Christ, for the perfection. We know this, the body of Christ starts out first with sinners. They come in at different stages of life, in their experience. But the end result is that we can all eventually be taught the right things, that we can spiritually grow to attain an understanding, knowing how to give ourselves to the Lord and allow ourselves to actually function as a living

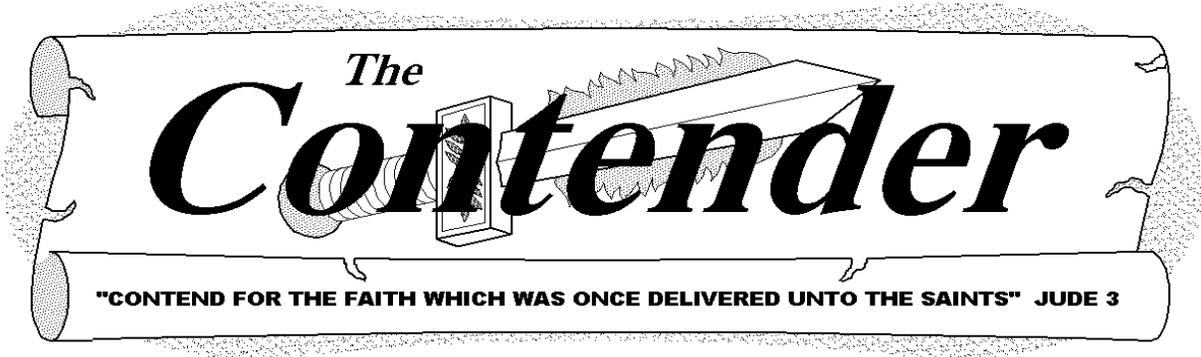
organism, which is the body of Christ. When we look at the organizations today, we have to admit they were an element of people, that at one time, had something from God. He used that to restore something that is vital to the overall Christian faith. But it is sad to say, people in their carnal way of thinking are always content, that is enough, we don't need any more, so they sit down. They just sit down and denominate. Therefore God could not perfect the actual individual, while the body of Christ is scattered through all these systems. That is why it was necessary that we have spiritual knowledge enough to know that in the last days, again as He sends the spirit of Elijah to start the dispensation of Grace, God knew exactly that the end time element of Gentiles would be split up by all these diverse denominational beliefs. He is not taking the Bride out of one particular system. His messenger came with a message and when it sounded, people came out of this, this, this, and that. When we look here in this day and time, again the Spirit of God is going to deal with us to not only bring us together in our doctrines, but it is going to mold our character, our behavior, our conduct, how we walk before the Lord and serve Him in the presence of the rest of the body of Christ, and how He can use us. We have to begin to recognize the leadership of God in our own respective life. When Paul wrote here, he said, for the perfection, the final reaching of a point of completeness, where in the eyes of God, it is now at a stage wherein there

is nothing left to do to it, but take it. Because he plainly says over here later, He will present it to Himself a glorious Church. Not a denominational church, but a glorious Church, having neither spot, wrinkle, or blemish. That is human language, meaning there will be no carnal things held on to, just carrying along traditional things, well that is what I believe. We are going to be willing to empty out everything we have carried in life that we thought was necessary. Because we are going to allow the grace of God to teach us what truth is, and what it is for. For the perfection, the completeness of the overall body. It also presents the opportunity for the ministry to function. First off, if there is not a need, if there is not a visible need among us, then there is no need for God to have a ministry to deal with it. Let me use this illustration, if none of us ever got sick, why have a doctor? If none of our teeth ever rotted out, why have a dentist? Think about it. Well when you bring that into the spiritual realm, the ministry is not working on the physical man, but on the inner man. For the edifying, uplifting, encouraging, of the body of Christ, the individual believers. Ephesians 4:13, "Till (that is progressive, it involves time) we all come (or reach) in the unity (harmony) of the faith, (of (the) faith, not a faith) and of the knowledge of the Son of God, (We find out He is not the third person of a trinity, He is the one and only person of the Godhead. When we come to that knowledge, then by that time, it literally means that we are approaching the point

where we begin to measure up) unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." We are not going to fall short of everything God potentially will cultivate in us. I believe when we begin to realize where we are in time, how short time is in front of us, we are going to want to be spending most of our time meditating, Lord, help me when I get up in the morning, that I can go about each day, doing the things your way. Let me say this for a comparison. Being led of the Spirit of God, don't mean we get up in the morning with our eyes closed, now Lord, just lead me for the day. You haven't had breakfast, well I am waiting on the Lord to tell me when I should have breakfast. There are people who have been just like that. That is how narrow minded they get. Well I want the Lord to tell me. Then dinner comes, but there is nothing on the stove cooking. I am using this as an illustration. People can become so narrow minded. But I want Him to lead me, I don't want to do anything on my own. Well there are some things you are going to do on your own, because if you have about ten cows and they need to be milked, don't sit there waiting for God to tell you to go milk the cows. That is a necessity. After awhile there will be ten cows down in the barn, bawling their heads off, come and milk me. That might sound like a carnal illustration, but God did not put you here with a brain to be dormant, just because you turned your life over to Him, and you want Him to tell you when to do this and when to do that. He is not

going to tell you when to take a bath, your neighbor might though. Maybe I better stop with that. But there are some things, as you go down the pathway of life and you are willing to walk with Him and let Him mold your life, as you more and more come into the stature to portray Christ, how you look at things, how you reach out and want to help your brothers and sisters, God sometimes will just put you in a corner. Sometimes we need to watch the circumstances that prevail about us, watch them. If you see certain conditions prevailing that never change, you can look at the condition, it can either come out positive or negative. I am using an illustration. So you just sit there, Lord, I don't know what to do, I don't know what to do. I am frustrated. But if you prayed and He has not in some way shown you visibly by a dream or something, what to do, and yet you know you have to do something, God gave you a brain, and there is going to come a time when you have to use it in such a case. You look at that in the overall long term effect and try to look at it from the good standpoint, for your spiritual benefit. If it is a condition He has brought about in your life to force you, and you chose the right thing, I promise, once you are past the point of your decision and you have done what you thought best, it will all come to you and you will be glad you made the choice. I hope you understand what I am saying. I have to say in closing, when the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, the gifts of the Spirit are just signs, not evidence. That is why Jesus said in

Mark, these signs shall follow them that believe. Well these things can all be visible and audible in that respect. If our mind is only on that and not on the character, the exampleship and manner of life we portray, we are falling short and that is exactly where the denominational groups are today. I will say this, many of the Pentecostal people at one time really believed in dedicated, holy living, separate from the world, not being conformed to this world, but they have gone the way of Hollywood. They speak in tongues, but some of the things they advertise in their services, sixty years ago the founding fathers of it would have scorned them. But that is the way they have drifted because they have lost sight of spiritual reality. They don't let the Holy Spirit teach them anything.



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