

The *Contender*

"CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS" JUDE 3

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He Gave Gifts Unto Men



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IN THIS LITTLE MESSAGE WE WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD, AND ALSO THE GIFTED MEN THAT GOD HAS SET IN THE CHURCH FOR THE PERFECTING OF THE LIVING ELEMENT OF HIS BODY IN THESE LAST DAYS.

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WE WANT TO CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO WHAT MEN SAY ABOUT VARIOUS THINGS, THEN SHOW YOU WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT THEM. WE WILL ALSO SHOW WHY THERE IS NO LIFE LEFT IN THESE DENOMINATIONAL SYSTEMS OF RELIGION, AND WHY IT IS NECESSARY FOR TRUE BELIEVERS TO BE RESTORED TO THE FAITH OF OUR APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

WHEN YOU READ THE PARABLE OF THE THIRTY, SIXTY, AND HUNDRED FOLD, DO YOU THINK OF IT AS A GRADUATING PROCESS OF BELIEVERS? MANY PEOPLE DO, BUT THE TRUTH MAY SURPRISE SOME OF YOU. LET US JUST LOOK AT THESE THINGS TOGETHER, AND TRUST

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THE HOLY GHOST WILL GIVE TO EVERY HEART THE TRUE REVELATION THAT BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

TEXT: EPHESIANS 4:4-16

Realizing that we are living in a day when so many people from so many different religious persuasions are saying, Jesus Christ can come any time now, and realizing also that most of them have based their opinions on denominational teaching, which is no more in most cases than just a log of man made traditional ideas, I am trusting God to help me bring out something that will allow true saints to see a clear picture. Nothing I could ever say would change the great multitudes of religion, but there is a truth that runs consistent with the word of God from Genesis all the way through the book of Revelation, and that is what God's foreknown children are hungering for; therefore I ask you to pray that God will allow us to feed our souls upon that truth, that we may grow in the stature of our Lord Jesus Christ. As far as Jesus coming just any time now: I will repeat what I have said many times before. He could come for any of us as individuals at any moment. If so, those individuals will go into caskets and be placed somewhere to await the resurrection, but you can be assured, He will not

come for the rapture of the church, until everything has been fulfilled that must proceed that event, and there are still a number of things that fall into that category. God will not get in a hurry and bypass some of what is written in the book. If He would do that, then we would not know whether we could place our confidence in Him or not. Our great hope is based upon our faith that He will fulfill every word that is written, regardless of how insignificant some of it may sound to the natural mind. To me, everything in the Bible is important. It was all written to accomplish some purpose of God. I realize that I may say some things in a message like this, that will not be agreeable to everyone that may read it, but I am set to stand for what I see in the book, regardless of human feelings. We would all do well to stop looking at the flesh side of things, and begin to realize that this book is written for the benefit of the inner man who was created in the image of God. It is God's ultimate purpose that should be considered in all things, and that of course is the redemption and reconciliation of the inner man. The outer man (the flesh) is to be brought under subjection to the inner man which is spirit.

**ONE LORD - ONE FAITH - ONE
BAPTISM**

Let us open our Bibles to the 4th chapter of Ephesians now, and see how the apostle Paul taught this body of believers, made up of every race, color and creed upon the face of the earth. We will also see how the Lord gave gifts unto men and set them in this great universal body, to function in His place until He does come for His redeemed church. He does not preach and minister to His church through angelic beings; He uses fleshly men, and He will continue to do so until the church is perfected, ready to ascend to glory. We will start with verse 4, in this 4th chapter of Ephesians. "There is ONE body, and ONE spirit, even as ye are called in ONE hope of your calling: ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Alright, first we see that there is only one body of believers in the Lord's true church. Of course this word, body, is a figurative word, used by Paul to denote the tabernacle of God. In other words, that is a term applied, because God is dwelling in His people, His church. It has been so ever since the upper room experience of Acts 2:1-4, when the Holy Ghost was given to believers. You have a physical body, made up of many members, and each member of your body has its own particular function,

and as long as every member functions as it was placed there to do; you have a healthy body. On the other hand, let one or more of those members begin to let down on their part; what do you have? You have a body that is not doing all that it was created to do. God created Adam and Eve perfect. There was not one flaw in their physical makeup, but when they disobeyed God's word, and God sent them forth from the garden, out of His presence: it set a law of death in motion. From that moment on, humanity has had a death sentence hanging over it. That law of death coupled with all the sins of mortal men, has worked through the ages to produce some pitiful cases in the lives of human beings. It is easy for us to see what has happened to physical bodies when certain members of those bodies failed to function in their proper order, but I wonder, sometimes, just how many people actually make a spiritual comparison, looking at the church of the living God as ONE body with many members, and each member having a particular function in that one great body? Do they see what has happened to that body and what must take place in order for it to be restored to its original state? The first church did not start out with a dozen different faiths, divided into denominations, believing in three persons in the Godhead, and saying that it made no difference whether a believer was baptized or not. You can take my word for it; when the church started out on its journey through time:

every last one of them believed the same. Every one of those apostles taught a pure revelation of the Godhead, and every believer was led to understand that it was the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ that would indwell them, giving them eternal life, and that this Spirit is the same sovereign Spirit that was in the beginning, before there was anything created. In other words, the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ is also the Spirit of the Father that dwelled in Him. Therefore there is only one body of true believers, and that body is made up of all those who have been filled with that same Spirit. That caused Paul to emphasize the fact that there is only ONE baptism, and that is the baptism of the Holy Ghost which actually puts the believer into the body of Christ. This in no way excludes water baptism for the remission of sins, but water baptism does not put the believer into the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is what Paul is dealing with. Water baptism is administered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of all the deeds you have done in the flesh, that was against the will of God for your life. It shows that you are willing to die to the old man, and be raised from that watery grave to live a new life as a new creature in Christ Jesus. By this act, you are giving up to God, submitting your will to His will. That is what death to the old man amounts to. That makes you a candidate for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, according to Acts 2:38, where

the apostle Peter proclaimed, “Repent, and be baptized (in water) every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the REMISSION OF SINS, and ye shall receive the GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST.” Upon receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost, you not only have the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ in you; you have the Spirit of the Father also, for they are one and the selfsame Spirit. That is the reason Jesus could say to one of His disciples, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, (Jesus was speaking from the standpoint of a man, here.) And we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” Now you do not receive two persons who take up their abode within you; you receive ONE SPIRIT, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which is also the Spirit of the Father who is to be worshiped, glorified, and served with a pure heart. “There is ONE GOD and FATHER of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Eph. 4:6)

ONLY GOD IS WORTHY

Verse 7, of our next text applies to every last person in they body of Christ, from the ministry all the way to the least person who is always so tormented, constantly saying, I am not worthy to be saved; Why would God love me? Brother! Sister! Stop tormenting yourself. You have no

scripture authorizing you to feel that anyone is worthy of God's great salvation. The scriptures clearly teach, that it is by grace, through faith, that we are saved. If you would just go back to Ephesians 2, for a minute, we will read verses 8 & 9, to see what Paul had to say about that. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the GIFT of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." It does not matter how good nor how bad we were in former days; if we have truly repented and received God's gift of eternal life: all of our past deeds are as far from us as the east is from the west in the mind of God. There is not one of us who could honestly say that we were worthy of the gift of eternal life, but God does not want us to entertain the devil by constantly harping on our unworthiness. We should rather glorify and praise God for His mercy, and just thank Him for saving our wretched souls. Therefore Paul says, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Brother! That verse takes in every one of us. By His sovereign grace, God is cleaning up a people that He can have fellowship with. He wants us to fellowship Him from the standpoint that we are clean, washed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Because of the atonement work at Calvary: we are able to fellowship our heavenly Father, and walk with Him in true holiness.

Out of those great multitudes that followed Jesus during His earthly ministry you would not have found very many who thought they were worthy. Those who thought they were worthy of God's favor stood back and found fault with Jesus, and tried to prevent others from coming to Him. Those who followed Him were looking for some way to be rescued from out of their dilemma Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast 7 devils could have said, I am not good enough; I am not worthy, but remember, Jesus said that He did not come to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners. Those who are well need not a physician, said He. It is the sick who need a physician, and we were all very sick spiritually, when He reached down His hand of mercy and grace to us. That is why we ought to just be thankful and love Him, knowing that He first loved us.

PRAY - STUDY - YIELD

Now there are some who go from a state of feeling unworthy and condemning themselves: right over to another playground of Satan. These are they who are forever worrying about what they are, in the body of Christ. I do not know whether I am an elbow, a big toe, or what: I just feels so inferior. Did you ever hear anyone talk like that? Do any of you talk like that? I

hope not. It is time for every redeemed child of God to begin to see themselves in the scriptures. If you will take time to see yourself as a child of God, that has been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and filled with the Holy Ghost, you will realize that you need not worry about what you are; you can leave that up to God. It is who you are that makes the difference, and if you know that you are a child of God; you ought to be certain that you no longer serve as a tool for the devil. Bro. Jackson: Can a Christian be a tool of the devil? Any time you diminish the grace and mercy of God, and allow yourself to worry and fret about things that cause misery: that is exactly what you are. Do not worry about what you are, in the body. The head is what directs the function of every member of the body, so all we need be concerned about is that we are subject to the leading of the Spirit of God that is within us. When Paul spoke of the ministry he specifically layed out their offices, and their functions, but you will not find where he went into detail explaining how to know if you are a foot, a rib, or an ear. When he spoke of the gifts of the Spirit; he explained their function in the body, and gave counsel on the use of those gifts in his first epistle to the Corinthian church. To the Ephesians, he says, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." But when you go to 1st Corinthians 12:7, you hear him saying this, "But the manifestation of the

Spirit (gifts in operation) is given to every man (that means every person, not just the men) to profit withal." Saints, I say this by the authority of the scriptures. The Holy Ghost which is the very means by which you were placed into the mystical body of Christ, somewhere, somehow will show Himself in your life, but it is not for you to set the goal; your part is to pray, study His word, and yield yourself to Him. Whatever He does manifest though, is for the good of the whole body, and certainly not to be used as a personal toy. Some have abused those precious gifts of the Spirit, but they are going to have to stand before God one of these days, and answer for what they have done. Jesus spoke of some who, in that day would say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Though they had truly done these things, they never had that close intimate relationship with the Lord, and that is the standpoint from which He said, "I never knew you." Be sure that the whole body may be profited. If the devil cannot persuade you to reject the word of God: his next move is the get you going in the wrong direction with it. He gets mad when Christians hold to the word and glorify God in what they say and do. What I really desire to impress upon every one of you though, is that we do not have any scriptural

authority to expect any certain manifestation of the Holy Ghost as the evidence that He is in us. Just let Him manifest Himself in your life as it pleases Him.

WE ARE NOT REBELLIOUS
ALIENS

When we come to verse 8, of our text scriptures we find Paul speaking about something of a higher order. Listen. "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." You will notice that Paul said, "He saith," so turn with me into Psalms 68:18, and we will read where David actually prophesied this by the Spirit of God. The very things we are preaching on, "He Gave Gifts Unto Men," was prophesied by David. Let us read it. "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: (That means, He went down into Hell, preached to imprisoned spirits, set the righteous ones free, and took them to glory with Him) thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Now that did not mean to imply that anyone would remain to be rebellious, once the grace of God has come to them, but it does express the sovereignty of God in His redemption provisions for His foreknown sons and

daughters. Brother! I am glad that the Psalmist David, prophesied about old Raymond Jackson who is a descendant of Gentiles, who were looked upon by the Jews as heathen, pagan, rebellious aliens, and no better than dogs. Gentiles were the uncircumcised, that you read about in the Bible, and the Jews thought God could not do one thing for them. Yet one of their own, prophesied that God would give gifts to them, (the rebellious) and dwell among them. Once His grace comes to us and causes us to repent and receive Him into our lives by the baptism of the Holy Ghost and a revelation of truth, there should be no more rebellion in us. From then on, it should be His will, that is expressed through our lives. We are no longer aliens, cut off from the commonwealth of Israel, cut off from eternal life, and without hope; we are now of the household of faith, and our bodies have become the very temples of the great Jehovah God who first presented this gospel to the nation of Israel. Isn't that a wonderful thing to know? Praise God! When Paul was dealing with this prophesy, in Ephesians 4, he went on to say, (verse 9) "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first in the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things," (or fulfill all things) You might say, When did HE give gifts unto men? Those gifts are in the Holy Ghost that was given to the disciples first, on the day of Pentecost,

which you read of in the 2nd chapter of Acts. That took place seven weeks after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

MESSIAH TO SOME - A DEVIL TO OTHERS

You will remember that when Jesus was tempted by the Pharisees and Sadducees one particular day, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven, and He answered them something like this, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." This is where Paul begins to pick up on what he is dealing with here in Ephesians 4. He was not a disciple during the earthly ministry of Christ, but by the revelation of the Holy Ghost he makes these scriptures come alive for these Ephesians. He picks up right where Jesus led His disciples out as far as to Bethany, blessed them, and ascended into heaven while they stood watching, and says, Now that He ascended, what is it that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth, and goes on to speak of how He must fill all things. In other words

all prophecies and promises must be fulfilled. David prophesied that He would give gifts unto men, and Isaiah prophesied that He would show judgment to the Gentiles, (Isa. 42:1 & Matt. 12:18) and Jesus Himself, speaking to His disciples, said, "And I pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever: Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be IN YOU. I will not leave you comfortless: I WILL COME TO YOU. (John 14:16-18) He knew those disciples who had learned to lean upon Him so completely, were going to need a comforter when His physical presence was taken from them; therefore He said, I will pray the Father, (not another person, but the sovereign Spirit) and He shall give you another Comforter." Now this Comforter was also to be their teacher that would guide them, or lead them into ALL truth. He goes right ahead to reveal the identity of that Spirit of truth when He said, "I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS: I WILL COME TO YOU." He goes right ahead in verse 19, and says, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." His physical presence ceased to be seen, but through eyes of faith we see Him. HALLELUJAH! Old Raymond

Jackson has never seen Jesus Christ in the flesh; yet through eyes of faith, His great plan of salvation for my wretched soul is just as real to me as it was to those who actually walked with Him on earth. Just seeing Him with their natural eyes had no spiritual benefit; for many of those Jews who saw Him, spit upon Him, and later took part in crucifying Him. It just proves what He said about no one being able to come to Him without the Father (SPIRIT) first drawing him. He was everything the prophets had prophesied the Messiah would be, but it took more than just the physical eye to recognize it. Those whom the Father revealed Him to, worshiped Him, while others that had seen just as much, called Him a devil. Even Paul, the very apostle who wrote these epistles, before his conversion on the road to Damascus, persecuted Christians and cast them into jail; yet we find him later, (after he had been drawn by the Father) writing to the Philippian church like this, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, (Christ) and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Jesus Christ is the central figure in everything that pertains to God's great redemption plan for the ages. Therefore let me prevail upon every one of you to keep everything in its proper perspective.

Do not allow manifestations of the Spirit to take preeminence over the word, and neither should you become so lopsided that you make no room for the Spirit to move, for all of the Bible must be fulfilled before Jesus wraps this age up. The will of the Father was accomplished totally, in His earthly ministry, but there yet remains to be accomplished a few things, before He comes back with the saints to rule and reign on earth for one thousand years. On earth, in His first advent, He revealed the Father to those who believed, and when He ascended far above all heavens, He left men behind who would continue His ministry, but He instructed them to tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high, power that would enable them to do the very same works that He had been doing. In Acts 1:8, we read, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This lets us know that without the Holy Ghost, people who try to do the work of God are just flapping their earthbound wings. Ten days after He ascended; He definitely began to fulfill the promises He had made to His disciples.

**PERFECTION THROUGH
GOD'S TRUE MINISTRY**

When the Holy Ghost fell upon those who had tarried in an upper room at Jerusalem, it set something in motion that is still effective today. The grace age church of the Lord Jesus Christ was launched with that experience, and all the gifts and offices of that church are by the Holy Ghost. That brings us right back to our text scripture, where we will now read verse 11 & 12, of this 4th chapter of Ephesians. Here, Paul begins to name those offices, and tell what they are for, and goes on, in verse 13 to tell just exactly how long they will be effective in the body of Christ. Listen. "And He gave some, APOSTLES: and some, PROPHETS: and some, EVANGELISTS and some, PASTORS and TEACHERS: For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (FOR HOW LONG?) Till we all come in the UNITY OF THE FAITH, and of the KNOWLEDGE of the Son of God, unto a PERFECT man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." That one verse, standing alone, should be enough to convince believers that the five fold ministry will remain in the church until the little bride of Christ is perfected, and ready to take her flight to the marriage supper of the Lamb. With that in mind: let us begin to look at the gifts of the Spirit

that are in the church. First I would like to take a look at those gifted men of that era of time. God never set those men in the church to be worshiped or idolized; they were commissioned to do the work of God, but you can believe me: not one of them ever robbed God of His glory and honor. Take Peter for instance. God, by a Holy Ghost vision, showed Peter something that caused Him to enlarge his scope and ministry in relation to the gospel. I am talking about the vision Peter had while on the housetop praying, at Joppa. God showed him that he should not call any man common or unclean, and then instructed him to go with the men who had come to lead him to Cornelius, the Roman centurion. When he was entering the house of Cornelius, the old Roman fell prostrate and worshiped him, but please notice that Peter took him up, saying, "I myself also am a man." Here stood an apostle, a man who had walked the streets of Jerusalem, and sick old crippled folks who were placed along the streets where his shadow would fall upon them were healed as he passed by. We read in the book of Acts that the fame of this man went abroad throughout all the land. Why. Simply because, by the power of the Holy Ghost; he was doing the very same works that Jesus had been doing when He passed through their streets. In Matthew 9:20, we read where a woman which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years was instantly healed when she touched

the hem of Jesus' garment. That is where her faith was, and God rewarded her faith. Then in the 5th chapter of Acts we read were a great multitude brought their sick and lame folks to the apostles at Jerusalem, and they were all healed. Some of them received their healing when the shadow of Peter passed over them, but we all know there was no virtue in Peter's shadow. Neither was their any virtue in the hem of the garment Jesus wore. It was just a faith contact point on the part of those who believed like that. But if Peter had been like a lot of these television preachers of our day, he never would have refused the worship of old Cornelius, but rather, would have enjoyed it. Any true child of God knows there are no men on earth that should receive worship, and just thing; the Roman Catholic Pope who is supposed to be the successor of Peter, requires such worship from those who would approach him. I would have to say, Someone missed the boat somewhere. Peter would not stand for any such as that. It is a stench in the nostrils of God when carnal men cause human souls to be subjected to such as that. Jesus Christ is the only man who ever walked upon the face of this old globe whose feet were worthy to be kissed, and it seems that it took a harlot woman to recognize that. In the 7th chapter of Luke we read where a certain Pharisee named Simon, invited Jesus to his house for a meal, but he did not treat Him with due respect when He arrived, or he would have made

provision for His dusty feet to have been washed. His failure to do according to their custom made way for a certain sinner woman to fall at the feet of Jesus and wash them with her tears, and then dry them with the hair of her head. Simon was very critical in his heart because Jesus had allowed such a woman to touch him, but Jesus knew his heart and reminded him of his own failure in the matter. He never did require anyone to kiss His feet, but he certainly did not rebuke the woman for doing it. On the other hand He did say, Woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace. His feet were worthy to be kissed, but there has never been a pope upon this earth that was worthy of such worship.

AN APOSTLE IS ONE SENT

Alright, looking back to our text: "He gave some, apostles." That word apostle, literally scares some people half out of their mind. You can mention the fact that God has placed some apostles in the church to remain there until the end, and they are ready to climb the walls. Their traditions, and their creeds just simply do not leave any room for an apostle's ministry. In the first place; most of them have a very distorted idea of what a New Testament apostle is, anyhow. The word itself just simply means, one sent. Then, as far as that goes,

practically all of the five fold ministry, at one time or another, was sent. When you read the book of Acts, you do not find where those prophets, evangelists, and so forth, just sat around twittling their thumbs; they were led by the Holy Ghost from place to place, just like the apostles. If there was any one of them that was more prone to stay in one place, it was the pastor. But as you read church history you find that there were times when these men had to stand at a post of duty and serve as a pastor, so do not get too technical about those things. Some get the idea, that as long as you are on the go: you are an apostle, but the minute you stand still, you are something else. How childish. These are the type of people who say that the Laodicean church age prophet messenger was a church age messenger until 1963, then, after that, he became a prophet. You will never find the Bible making any reference like that about the prophets of old. Take Jeremiah, for instance, chapter 1, verses 4 & 5, and you will see what I mean. "Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Once those men began to speak forth the things of God, and that Jewish society began to recognize them, they looked upon them as prophets. They did not wait until a certain year to accept what they said as Thus Saith the Lord. It takes Gentiles to play with the things

of God like that. The calling of God upon a man's life is not subject to change every few days, or weeks; God does not have to repent and change His mind; His first decision is perfect every time.

GIFTED MEN AND GIFTS

Everyone who professes to believe the Bible readily accepts the fact that Peter, John, James, and those men were apostles, for they read where the Lord Jesus Himself appointed them personally, and they can somehow accept the fact that Paul was an apostle, even though Jesus did not appoint him personally, while He was upon earth. But when it comes to anyone else apart from the first age, being an apostle, they think that is just plain ridiculous. If they would just stop to realize that it was a divine act of God that called Paul; they would realize that a divine act upon the part of God could place a particular calling upon the life of anyone so chosen. When God first began to deal with Paul: he was an over zealous Pharisee named Saul, who at that time was persecuting Christians, and God used a man named Ananias, there in Damascus, in His dealing with Saul. This man was more like a New Testament prophet. Saul was led into the city, blind, after Jesus had appeared to him on the road, and God gave him a vision of a man named

Ananias that would come in and put his hands upon him, that he might receive his sight. At the same time God gave Ananias a vision showing him what to do, so he went to the house where Saul was, and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, (He was sent also.) That thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." As we examine the scriptures in connection with these gifted men, we are also seeing the gifts in operation. You know what the gifts are, WISDOM, KNOWLEDGE, FAITH, HEALING, MIRACLES, PROPHECY, DISCERNING OF SPIRITS, TONGUES and INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES, and they are all operated by the Holy Ghost that indwells the true believer; therefore they are not confined to the ministry only. Anyone who has the Holy Ghost, has the potential for any of these gifts, and they all belong in the church, but it is not the will of God for the gifts of the Spirit to have the preeminence over the preaching of the word. That is why Paul said, "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." (1st Cor. 14:32) The gifts are to be operated in an orderly fashion, and never should be allowed to get out of control through over-zealousness.

SHEPHERD AND BISHOP OF OUR SOULS

I want to get back to the gifted men, or ministries, for a little while, here, and try to help some who have trouble understanding what we call, the five fold ministry. Some of them even think that God is going to raise up some more Old Testament type prophets here in these last days, but I can tell you of a certainty that He is not going to do any such thing. Whatever God has for His church is going to be exactly as Paul states in his Ephesian letter. Now I do not expect denominational church leaders to accept this, no more than they did Bro. Branham as a prophet messenger to the age. Some of them have said, I will accept such and such a gift, (They enjoyed having Bro. Branham pray for their sick folks, and the gift of discernment. They got the crowds of people they wanted.) But I cannot see that man as a prophet. It just boils down to the fact, that if a person does not have a revelation by the Holy Ghost, they are not going to accept much of anything except denominational programs. God is moving among His bride saints though, just like Ephesians 4, declares that He will. Those whom He foreknew are being perfected while the rest are running their man-made programs. The ministry that was in Christ is in the church today. Let me

explain that. In Hebrews 3:1, Jesus is referred to as the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. That He truly was. He was also a prophet. He was a teacher sent from God. He was a pastor, meaning shepherd. He is called the Shepherd and bishop of our souls, and Brother! If He was not an evangelist; why do the scriptures say that He was anointed of the Holy Ghost, and went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil? He traveled about, preaching, teaching, declaring the will and purpose of God, and establishing right principles and motives in the minds and hearts of believers. He was all of these ministries wrapped up in one body of flesh, but when He departed and sent the Spirit back to take the place of His physical presence: He took that of His ministerial ability, broke it up, and placed it in certain chosen vessels throughout the universal body of believers. These have the charge of ministering the word of God, and guarding the body of believers against the attacks of the adversary. Paul states explicitly that they are placed in the church “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, (Paul wrote this before there ever was any decline from the unity of the faith. It was prophetic, for a future generation that would be restored to what that first age had.) And of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the

measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” You can read the rest later.

A TRUE APOSTLE

I have said many times, if that 2nd generation of church leaders had not began to compromise and give way to the power of the adversary, the church never would have strayed from its onward and upward progressive course. They gave way to pressures from the adversary, and when the battle got to be too much, martyrdom marked the age. There was never another apostolic apostle (if I may use that term) after John passed off the scene. He was the last one that stood uncompromisingly for the word of God, exactly like it was revealed to those first apostles. There have been many down through the ages, that have been called apostles because of their outstanding ministries, but their doctrine was not free from the Antichrist leaven that had been mixed in, after those first apostles passed off the scene. There have been many outstanding men who have been instrumental in leading many souls into the kingdom of God, coming out of the Dark Ages, but there was not one true apostolic apostle among them. Some of them even died for their faith in martyrdom, just like the first apostle did, but that is not what you use to mark them as a true apostle. A true

apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ will preach and teach the word of God exactly like Peter, Paul and all of them taught it. If Paul could have lived in some of the ages since the decline of the church, and heard some of these men who claimed to be apostles, he would have surely said, Where in the world did you get that? He is the one that said, (in his letter to the Galatians) "If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Brother, he knew what they had preached was straight from the throne of God, and he warned those people against receiving anything from anyone that failed to measure up to what they had already been taught. Such a decline was destined to come about though, for Jesus had already spoken in parables, how the kingdom of heaven would go through certain changes. Read the 13th chapter of Matthew, and parallel those 7 parables with the 7 church ages. Then come back to Ephesians 4, and you will see why God has set these offices in the church. He is getting ready to reap the increase from the seed sown in that first age, and it will take a true five fold, apostolic ministry to bring the revelation of the word of God back in line with the way it was preached and taught in the beginning.

ANTI TRUTH IN ANTICHRIST

As we have said many times, God used many different men to restore certain apostolic truths to the church, truth that was lost during the Dark Ages, but none of those men ever got it all together in one package like Paul had it. It was scattered all around in various denominational circles. Then came the day when God anointed a little man by the name of William Marrion Branham, to collect those truths from these various circles, and present them in one package to those who would come out from those man made systems and take a stand for the whole truth of the word of God. He had a ministry that was the closest thing to the ministry of Christ, that man has ever witnessed, but please bear in mind the fact that he was not Christ, as some claim him to be. He was a man, born in sin just like all the rest of us, but he had a calling of God upon his life, and I say, He fulfilled that calling. I will defend the man's character. I will defend his spiritual calling. I will defend his Biblical position as the prophet messenger to the church age, and I will defend his teaching, but I will not defend every remark that God permitted him to make outside the frame work and scope of the message he was dealing with. Neither will I defend the heresy and nonsense that some of these would be preachers promote as the teaching of Bro.

Branham. Most of them are unable to take what he said and line it up with the Bible; therefore all they have is a book full of statements, taken out of context, and used to their own choosing. To me, they are no better than some of those priests of the Dark Ages. Antichrist is Antichrist wherever you find it. If they were truly following Bro. Branham's teaching, they would be using their Bibles instead of a book full of statements, for that was the main theme of all that he taught; "GET BACK TO THE BIBLE." You know that is the truth. Many people of this movement are just as blind as those people back there in the 5th and 6th century, and on through the Dark Ages; they swallow anything that is fed to them.

FALSE UNITY

If you will pay attention now, I want to try and show you something. Once that Catholic church was established as the universal church of Christendom, Why do you suppose they all taught exactly the same thing? Why did every priest that joined the ranks of the clergy, teach the same thing? Simply because they were taught that the church was supposed to be in unity, in oneness of belief and faith. That is why they all taught the holy trinity, the apostles creed, and so forth. Of course there had to be a few exceptions in order to fulfill

what was written to that Thyatira church which typed that particular age. Certain monks of that Thyatira age were used of God to give that Catholic church an opportunity to repent and escape the judgment of God, just like you read in Revelation 2:18-23. That Thyatira church had a woman named Jezebel, which called herself a prophetess, who taught, and seduced God's servants to commit fornication, and so forth. God went on to say, "I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: And I will give unto every one of you according to your works." That is the exact type of the Catholic church; therefore God used certain monks to give her an opportunity to repent, but she (the Catholic church) continued onward in her downward course; taking away, adding to, taking away, adding to, until there was very little left that even sounded like what Paul taught. Everyone danced to the pope's tune or he did not dance at all.

PETER'S KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

I wish someone would tell me why people are so afraid of a 20th century apostle, yet they do not hesitate for one minute to bow to a pope who claims to be the successor of the apostle Peter? Practically everything that Peter taught: he denies. He builds upon Peter's authority, but he rejects Peter's revelation. He claims to have Peter's keys to the kingdom of heaven, but Peter's keys were hidden in his heart; they were not hanging from a log chain around his neck. I dare say that 90 percent of universal Christendom, (as it is called) does not have the slightest idea what the reformation was for. It just goes to show that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, blind, and naked in a time when they think they have need of nothing. Luther had a genuine apostolic truth, "The just shall live by faith." It got a lot of people out from under the clutches of Catholicism where they had been held captive, thinking the pope alone had the power either to forgive sins or to condemn their souls to eternal torment. Those Catholic priests were just like a lot of these attorneys of our day; they gambled with mens souls just like these attorneys gamble with human lives. They were either paid so much to pray a soul out of purgatory, or that soul was damned, so they taught. It was a glorious day when God gave Martin Luther that truth which delivered many captive souls from bondage. Let me make a point right here, now. Every preacher that received Luther's

revelation preached the exact same thing that he preached. Luther had to put up with a lot of nonsense, but he did not have a bunch of preachers running around contradicting him. It was the same when Calvin came on the scene with the message of eternal security of the believer. It was received with the same fervency and zeal in the Holy Ghost. You can be sure there were extremes with it, just like there is with every other truth, but God is not responsible for the extremes: He is only responsible for getting the truth of that revelation back out of the Dark Ages. It is always man, grabbing with the carnal mind without a Holy Ghost revelation, that runs to extremes.

DENOMINATIONS SHUT GOD OUT

The Methodists got their message from John Wesley's revelation of holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. A man named Asbury came from England, and rode a mule up and down the Appalachian Mountain region, preaching the same message that John Wesley had preached to the coal miners in England. That is how the Methodist message came to the new world in the 18th century. There is a Bible college down here at Wilmore, Kentucky, named after the man who

carried that message of holiness. Now these men such as Luther, Calvin, Knox and Wesley, along with others, were not apostles; they were reformers, or restorers, restoring apostolic truth back to the body of Christ. Each time a little truth was restored, men took that truth and built it into a denominational system. That accounts for the fact that each of these systems have many congregations, and every one of them teach basically the same thing. They have printed their articles of faith, and all of their ministers are obligated to preach within that framework if they desire to keep in good standing with headquarters. When Methodists out in Topeka, Kansas began to receive the Holy Ghost, and reached the determination that they were receiving the same experience that those first disciples of Jesus received in Acts 2, they immediately began to call it, the Pentecostal blessing. Ever since that hour this has been referred to as the Pentecostal movement, and every preacher that has felt called of God to walk in the light of that Pentecostal message has taught it the same way. Naturally we are speaking from a general standpoint; there are always a few exceptions, but my point is that they all believe that there is to be a unity among believers. Their problem lies within their limited scope. Each one thought they were the ones that had the last word on what God is doing in the earth. From within those Pentecostal ranks there began to be

further light received, the light of the oneness of God. The thought, Surely this is the last thing that God will do; we surely have it all. But as time progressed they formed into a denomination, and that in itself proved that there had to be something else, for if their revelation was to usher in the coming of the Lord, for the rapture of the church, they never would have denominated. They did denominate though, and built their Bible schools which produced preachers that all taught their message the same way. They had a truth that the Baptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, and so forth, did not have, but when they formed into a denomination and drew up their articles of faith, they shut God out. There still had to be something else, something that would make room for Ephesians 4:11, for this fivefold ministry could not function within the framework of any of these denominations. That is why I say, From that first age all the way through to Laodicea, there has never been an apostolic ministry on the scene. It took all of those reformers, and all of those years in between that dark hour of church history and our day, to get the lost truth of the gospel message restored to the church. Up until the time that the messenger to this age delivered his message, there never could have been a five fold ministry. I am sure you will all agree that what Paul wrote about in Ephesians 4, has not yet had its fulfillment. What Paul wrote in Ephesians 5, leading up to the

point where Christ would present the church to Himself, a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish, has not yet had its fulfillment. It is yet for the future.

SATAN'S KINGDOM **TREMbled**

When you get a vision of the shape the church has been in, it is easy to see why Satan would fight so hard against Malachi 4:5-6. The messenger with that Elijah spirit, was not to be a reformer. His God ordained responsibility was to take all of those restored truths that the reformers had taught, and put them all back into the gospel message, making it the same as what those first apostles taught and preached. If we could have looked into the spirit world: we would have seen how Satan's kingdom began to tremble when that little man began to expose Catholicism, and shine the light of truth upon those denominational structures with their man-made doctrines. He had every reason to tremble, for he knew that his time was getting short. He knew God was going to call out a people from those denominational systems that He could wash with the waters of His word until they are pure. These are they that will come to the unity of the faith, and grow up into full stature of the Lord Jesus

Christ. These are they that will again have ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, and be ONE BODY of believers that have a true revelation of the ONE GOD and Father of all. Only recipients of the original gospel that has been restored to the church by that Elijah spirit of Malachi 4:5-6, will be among that number. There is no other message upon the face of this earth that can perfect a bride for the Lord Jesus Christ to rapture. The gospel is restored; the gifts of the Spirit are restored, and we are the generation that shall live to see the church of the Lord Jesus Christ perfected, through the ministry of these gifted men, this five fold ministry. Do not look for the multitudes of world religion to accept this restored gospel, though; it will be accepted only by those few who find that straight and narrow way that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 7:14.

GOD IDENTIFYING SPIRIT

Let me be very straight to the point about something now. The prophet messenger to this age did not give us another Testament; he simply pointed us back to the one we had already, the one that the church had strayed from. In the New Testament of the Lord Jesus Christ is that which was concealed in the Old Testament through types and shadows. It is revealed to us by His Spirit that dwells

within us; therefore we have no need for another. You will not find anywhere in the Bible that even indicates He will give us another Testament for these last days. It is just the opposite of that; God said He would send Elijah, to return us to the faith of our fathers who left the Old Testament to establish the New Testament. That Spirit of Elijah has always been a God identifying Spirit, and when it rested on Bro. Branham; that is exactly what it did. It revealed to this age that God is ONE SPIRIT, not three persons. It revealed that Catholic church as the great whore of Rev. 17:1, and called true believers back to the word of God that had been set aside while men followed man-made doctrines. Those who have been returned to the revealed word of God have no need of a Bible college to study theology, for Holy Ghost revelation supercedes all the theories that natural men have ever taught. Neither does it take a high school graduate to understand what the Holy Ghost teaches either.

PARALLEL SITUATIONS

The regathering of Israel process that God has used in these last few decades seems to be running parallel to the move of God with His grace age church. Around the year 1914, there began to be the tremor of a war

springing up in Europe. During those years, God began to deal with the land of Palestine, which is actually the homeland of the people of Israel. This set a staging point. Just as Pentecost opened up the great spiritual realm of the Holy Ghost for the church, God began to deal with that geographical strip of land, getting ready to open it up to the people who were to return to that land, and during those same years God began to send His messenger forth, speaking to the people in those religious systems that were to return to His word. Truly there has been a parallel here for the past 30 some years. At the onset of their exodus back to the homeland, it was not the thousands that caught the vision to go home. Oh no! Many of them were leaving Europe just to escape the pressure that was upon them, but as time went on: there began to be a vision catch fire among them. By the time we came in to the fifties there were literally thousands of Jews all over the world who desired to flock to Israel; they were catching the vision of returning to the homeland. So also, was it with the messenger to the age. People at first, did not catch the vision of a messenger to the age of Laodicea. That is why I said, the other night, that denominational bishops and superintendents and such like, will never catch such a vision, because their eyes are closed to the light. They already have their theology; they already have their system; they have closed the door to anything else;

therefore they will never go any further with God. Brother, any time a person refuses to accept more truth, they die, right in the very thing they have been blessed by God with. Just remember this, God never sits still; if you are going to walk with Him; you had better keep ready and willing to move on when He begins to stir your nest. I am thankful to God that He ever allowed me to catch a vision of this end time gospel light, and it thrills my heart to know that there are souls all over the face of this old globe that are catching such a vision also. They may be few in number, compared to the multitudes of world religion out there, but they are precious in the sight of God because they love truth. While the Jews were returning to their homeland, Gentiles who love truth have been returning to the apostolic gospel.

WHERE IS THE OFFENSE?

Ever since 1967 Western nations have constantly applied pressure to Israel to give up, give up, give up, but we know the truth, know that instead of giving up land, they must gain more, for they do not yet have all that God gave to them through the covenant made with their father, Abraham. If they should start giving up land: they would be going backward from what God spoke through their prophet Joel. God said, "And I will restore to you the years that

the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army that I sent among you, and ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed." What that adds up to, is that He will not only restore to the Jews all the land they once had, but their cities are to be restored also, and their government. Then He will give them back their King which is Christ Jesus. There is a restoring process in affect not only for Israel, but for the grace age church as well. I hope you can at least see that Israel cannot give up land that is rightfully theirs, no more than a Son of God can give up a revelation that has been restored to the church. We have had our messenger to the age that has told us how to get out of denominations, and what to come back to, and what we have been restored to, is exactly what the five fold ministry will pick up and minister to the universal body of believers that make up the bride of Christ. Their ministry to the bride will lead her right into her scriptural position in the plan of God, clothed in fine linen, and washed by the waters of His word. Let me say this also; just as the denominations did not want a prophet messenger to the age, neither do those of this movement who preach from quotes, want a five fold ministry. They do not want the gifts of the Spirit; they would rather have church order. They condemn me for

not accepting their church order, but I want to say this to them, If you teach church order, and give it scriptural authority, **YOU ARE A FALSE PROPHET**. Bro. Jackson: You had better be careful, talking like that, some will say. But let me call your attention to something that the apostle Paul said. In essence, here is what he said, If I yet preach circumcision just to please a bunch of Jews, then where is the offense of the cross of Christ? In my own situation, if I have to go along with these fellows, and preach a little church order here and there just to be friendly with them, and keep them off my back: then where is the offense for the gospel of truth that I am called to stand for? If any of you desire to be popular in this movement: you do not need to stay too close to me, for I am determined to stand for what I see in the word of God, and they do not like it. They do not like speaking in tongues, nor prophesying, nor interpretation of tongues, nor anything else that disrupts their church order, but I say, Did you come through the Pentecostal movement? Did you speak in tongues? Did you interpret, or prophesy? Then please do not throw that away; all of that belongs in the body of Christ. Did you used to have spiritual dreams? If so, then what is wrong now? That is all a part of restoration. Be like those spiritual Jews; do not give up what God has restored to you.

FACING REALITY

Some of you have heard me say, There is a holy people (JEWS) ordained to occupy a holy land, (ISRAEL) and a holy city, (JERUSALEM) and a holy spot (THE TEMPLE AREA.) All of that is very close to being a fulfilled reality. When God opens up the avenue for them to get that little holy spot: I believe the church will still be running parallel to them. God will somehow push back all the trash and nonsense, and drop the revelation into the hearts of some men whom God Himself has chosen to function in the offices of the five fold ministry. Some have said, Bro. Jackson: Where are those men now? They are right here in the body of Christ; it just hasn't been time for them to be fully anointed yet. There were years in between the closing of W.W.2 and the time when the messenger to the age delivered his message. Likewise there have been years elapse since he delivered his message, but you can be sure those anointed men will have to fulfill their ministry to the bride before she gets out of here, and I believe the time is close at hand. Let me say also, anyone who cannot accept the ministry of apostles being restored to the church will deny the gifts also, in the end. Nevertheless, He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, and He gave gifts unto men.

This is all in His word, and He is not going to take any of it out. Ephesians 4:11, is just as much for our day as Malachi 4:5-6, was for the years from the 1930's up through 1965. I will preach this as long as God gives me breath. I will not follow your flesh, and I do not expect anyone to follow mine, but if you do claim to have the Holy Ghost, and you still want to follow church order; then, may God have mercy on your mixed up soul. You are as blind as a bat. This is plain talk, I know, but it is way past due. The only order you can find that Paul ever taught is recorded in chapter 12, 13, and 14 of 1st Corinthians. Therefore I implore each of you to study these chapters, and if God has placed a gift in your life, right here is where it is to be manifested; not in a back room someplace. You say, Why did the prophet have church order? It served two purposes. First, it was his corrective way to deal with an error in conditions, and secondly, because he never did change it, God uses it for separating purposes. I have seen men (in earlier days) that could jump higher than my head, and the very minute church order was made, you would have thought someone had poured concrete in their shoes. That is why I say, You will never be able to know whether a person has the Holy Ghost or not, by observing how high they jump. It is how they treat the word of God when they hear it preached that tells the story.

THE DEAD STALK

Because of the way I preach, and some of the things I say, some folks have the idea that I think I am the only person in the world that is right, and that everyone else is wrong. I do not mean for it to sound like that; I have never wanted anyone just to take my word for anything. I desire to see them search the word of God and allow the Holy Ghost to reveal the truth to them. The they will not have to line up with my word at all; it will be the word of God that they have lined up with. If you judge me by your denominational theology, you are bound to find a great difference, for I want you to know that when this Bible was written, there was no such thing as a Catholic church, a Baptist church, Methodist, Lutheran, nor any of the other brands that are in the world today. Believers were first called Christians at Antioch; not because they had some man-made title hung on them, but because they were Christlike in morality, spirituality and doctrine. They were walking in the fellowship of the Spirit of God, and none of them looked upon their God anointed ministers, as men that should be worshiped along with God. Only blind pagans do that. As far as divisions; the Corinthian believers started some of that, and when Paul learned of it, he rebuked them for it.

Some of them were saying, I am of Paul; others, I am of Apollos, or Cephas, or Christ, but Paul asked them straight out, in his first letter, Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? The answers were obvious; therefore there should never have been any divisions in the body of Christ. Christianity started out with everyone believing the same thing. It was the deteriorating element fed into the church by that spirit of Antichrist that lowered the standards of believers and opened up their ranks to men like the Roman emperor Constantine, who was instrumental in substituting of the one God revelation, a three person godhead, which was later referred to as the holy trinity. Water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by immersion, was replaced by sprinkling or pouring a little water upon the person, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and by the time Luther began to protest that system that the church of the living God had been formed into, there was very little left, of what those first age Christians believed. Naturally as those various reformers received and delivered their particular message in God's restoration process, those who followed their teaching felt persuaded to be called by their name, or by something that associated them with their teaching. Time allowed this change, but the word of God itself never has changed, nor has its purpose changed. It will still produce a body of

holy people, all believing the same thing, that will one day be caught up together, to meet the Lord in the air. Jesus used certain natural parables to express the various stages of the church through the centuries of time, and if we will pay attention to those parables we will know for sure that the end time church will be just like the one we read about in the book of Acts. It is just like a grain of corn that is sowed into the ground; the grain dies, and rots, and in its place stands a nice green stalk with blades and tassel, and one or two ears of corn wrapped in a shuck so tight that the actual grain is not even visible. Yet anyone looking at that stalk will say that it is corn. At that point, the corn itself is in the milk stage, but by the time it matures to the point where it can serve its intended purpose, the only thing of all of that, that will be reaped into the corn crib will be the increase from that one grain which produced all that we described, and it will be just like the original. There will be no life left in the stalk, the blade nor the tassel; that life that came forth from that original grain will have been conveyed through that stalk right into all those new grains, but the stalk itself has no more life left in it. Somehow this ought to convey a little picture of the route of the church from the time those first age saints were planted in the ground. Though their physical bodies were committed to the ground to rot, that Spirit of God that was in them did not die. After centuries of time had passed that life began to

shoot forth through men like Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, and others, and for over 400 years there was life in those churches that were established from their teaching, but the body of Christ is moving into the maturing stage now, and all those systems are left just like the old dried up corn stalk. You might pull the ears of corn from the stalk and leave it standing, but you could never water that old dried up thing enough to get it to produce anything else with life, because there is no more life left in it. Does that help you see why we preach against denominations in this age when the church has already been called out from among them? It is not individual person that we speak against; it is the system itself. They can stay in those places if they want to, and they can scream, the days of miracles are passed; there are no more apostles, and never will be, but from their ranks, God has called out a people that will mature to be just like those of the first age. They will be as much like the original, as those new grains of corn were of the original seed. God's word did not change during the Dark Ages; it will still produce exactly what it says it will.

WHO CRUCIFIED JESUS?

Most of the fundamental movements of religion believe many of the things

that we believe. They believe in the resurrection: they believe in the rapture of true believers, and they believe that those who are raptured and resurrected will have immortal bodies, but they are missing the great scriptures that speak of how God is going to perfect His true body before the time for the rapture. Each one of them feel like it is their group that is going up, just like those scribes and Pharisees of the days of Jesus who thought they had everything that was available from God, but the truth of the matter is, Not one denomination will leave this world in the rapture. Why? Because they refuse to be washed by the word of God and dressed in a pure revelation of the scriptures. They are just like the gang that crucified Jesus. It was not the prostitutes, and gangsters that cried out to Pilot, Crucify him! Crucify him! It was those religious Jews that were always harping about Abraham being their father. When Jesus said, I am the bread of life that came down from heaven: They said, You are the son of Joseph and Mary whom we all know. They just did not want anything beyond what they had already. So is it with people in religious systems of our day. That is not to say that there have not been saintly people in them, in days past. There have been, and many of them died horrible deaths, because they refused to recant from what they believed and stood for from the word of God. That did not qualify them to be called apostles or prophets; they were

not in that realm of revelation of God's word, but their soul is just as secure, if they were walking in all the light available to them. Many people want to argue about these things, but I do not see anything to argue about. God is moving on, and all who are hungry, are moving with Him. If God does not show you something from His word; I would be wasting my time arguing with you. I appreciate truth, because God put a hunger in my heart for truth.

I WAS HUNGRY FOR TRUTH

I was a young boy, 14 or 15 years old, when I was first baptized in the Church of Christ church. I later moved from there, into another community where I began to see things that the Methodists stood for, that looked more scriptural than the way the Church of Christ taught. (Let me say this though, I saw many saintly people in the Church of Christ, back there in the 30's and 40's before God moved on past those systems.) Most of you have heard the testimony of how God dealt with my life through the years, but I just want to tell this part. When my wife and I were married, I did not know what God had done in the twentieth century. I did not even know there was such a thing as a Pentecostal move. Neither did I know that there were men who actually believed that God was still a divine healer, just like He was 1900 years

ago. I had heard it mentioned, in the Church of Christ, but they would say, Oh, all those miracles ceased with the death of the last apostles of Christ. I was ignorant of all that. I did not know what God was still doing, but I became very hungry for truth. I began to read the Bible, and seek the face of God, and in my reading, I saw where Zecharias went into the temple to burn incense, and the angel Gabriel came and spoke to him concerning Elizabeth, his wife, who had been barren, unable to conceive. Zecharias became frightened, but Gabriel said to him, "Fear not, Zecharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John." The angel went ahead and told Zecharias that this son would be great in the sight of the Lord, and that he would turn many of the children of Israel to their God. "He, (said the angel) shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the Fathers to the children, (This was a quote in part, from Malachi 4:5-6.) And the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." You will notice that he did not quote the other part of that scripture in Malachi, about turning the hearts of the children back to the fathers; he only quoted the part about turning the hearts of the fathers to the children. I sat there, a Methodists boy, knowing only that God had saved me and forgiven me of my sins, knowing nothing of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as I do now, and God put a

revelation in my heart. Namely, if we are living in the last days, just before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ: God will send that spirit of Elijah again. I could see that the ministry of John did not fulfill both parts of what Malachi had prophesied. At that time, I did not know whether I was living in the generation that would see it or not, but I knew in my heart that Jesus would not rapture the church until after that spirit of Elijah had returned again. I had been born and raised, right here in southern Indiana, but I did not know that God had already set in motion the fulfillment of the very scriptures I was seeing there, until Bro. Glen, right here in the church, came down one day, and told me about the ministry of Bro. Branham. When I heard that, I said, If this be true, then this is that Elijah that I have been looking for. I went to hear him preach, and I will say again, as I have said many times before, He made that Bible come alive to me. For the next 13 years I took every opportunity to sit under his ministry. That is why, when some of these fellows come around quoting Bro. Branham, I respond to them as I do. I sat right there; I know what he said, and God allowed me to catch a revelation of what he meant, that many of these quoters never did catch. If they had caught the revelation, they would not use those quotes in the way they do. If there ever was a man on this earth who lifted up the name of the Lord, and gave God glory for what He was going by His Spirit through the flesh of a

mortal man; that little man did. He never tried to build a kingdom for himself. Neither did he ever rob God of the glory and praise that was due Him, from the people who witnessed the miracles that took place. He would always say, I am just your brother; give God the glory. He never would have allowed all this idolatry that we see among those who followed his ministry, but now that he is gone, and cannot do anything about it; many of them will say things that would have broken his heart to hear them. They deify him, as much as they should deify Jesus Christ. Some have even baptized in his name, but none of this foolishness can ever diminish from the thing that God raised him up to do in this generation. He was anointed with that Elijah spirit, to call some people back to the faith of their apostolic fathers, and the very fact that we are here in this service today, believing as we do, gives testimony to the fact that he fulfilled his calling. What some of these others make him out to be is strictly in the hands of God. God is using their foolishness to separate His revealed people from all those carnal ones who followed Bro. Branham's flesh, without a revelation.

THE TEACHING COMFORTER

Now, just as John's ministry introduced an era of time for the first

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advent of Christ, to fulfill the first part of Mal. 4:5-6, so did Bro. Branham's ministry introduce an era of time for the next advent of Christ. (This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled, Matt. 24:34.) John's ministry was a launching pad, and following right on the heels of that, came Christ Himself, who picked up right where John had led the people to, and kept the momentum going for the next 3 ½ years until He was crucified. In the four gospels we read of His ministry during that 3 ½ year period of time, where he not only healed the sick, raised some of the dead, and fed great multitudes through a miraculous means from time to time; He also taught them many things, and promised them a Comforter that would teach them all things, and cause them to remember what He had taught them already. Brother, I want you to know, He sent the Comforter just like He promised, and we all know that the Comforter was the Holy Ghost that fell on those disciples who were assembled in the upper room at Jerusalem. In the Holy Ghost that came upon them, and filled them with His presence, was every ministry that was to benefit the church, from its birth all the way to the end of the grace age. Those men who received the Holy Ghost, did not have to go to a Bible school or seminary in order to fulfill the purpose of God in their lives. When the Holy Ghost got finished teaching them, they had a revelation burning in their hearts, and that revelation was not just for the

ministry; every believer in that first church was taught the same thing. They had apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, who ministered in the stead of Jesus, and every one of them had the same revelation. You would never find that kind of a ministry trying to cut each other down; they were all in unity of purpose, that is, building something for God. What they said and did was truly done in the name of Jesus Christ. No one tried to build himself an empire, or to be worshiped, as God, and neither did they exalt each other beyond measure. They kept Jesus Christ as the center of all activity. Do you see what I am getting at? Can you see what the true ministry of these last days is to be like? If you do not see what the ministry was like in that first age, and keep restoration in your mind, you could very well see some things in this hour that could deceive you. Now you know what I mean by that; some of those things that are going on in religious circles today seem so right, that those who have just been following the flesh of someone they have confidence in, will take off after it. Of course the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ will not be totally deceived, but she can avoid some hard knocks by a little closer examination of that which she might put her approval upon.

EXAMINING THE MINISTRY

Bro. Jackson: How do we examine these people who claim to be apostles, prophets, and so forth? I have always thought a great miracle worker would surely have to be an apostle. No. That is not what makes a man an apostle. Stephen was one of the seven men that was chosen to wait on tables; in other words, to help make daily distribution to the physical necessities of the people. But Acts 6:8 says, "Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." Then we read how certain men rose up against him, and disputed with him, but they were not able to resist, or cope with, the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke; therefore they stoned him to death. So you can see by that; it is not just a miraculous ministry that sanctions an apostle. Scripturally, Stephen's ministry fell within the scope of the evangelist. Another one of these seven men was Phillip, referred to in Acts 21:8, as Phillip the evangelist, which was one of the seven. We read in Acts, chapter 8, where Phillip (when persecution scattered the church) went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Phillip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. Unclean spirits came out of many of the people that were possessed with

them, and many lame and palsied people were healed, and a great number of them were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Even Simon the sorcerer that had held such power over those people in time passed, followed Phillip and witnessed all those miracles which were done by him, or by the Holy Ghost working through him. But none of this made him an apostle. As far as the church at Jerusalem was concerned he was a deacon; his ministry in Samaria showed him to be an evangelist, but nowhere is he ever looked upon as an apostle. What is an apostle then? An apostle could be none other than a man that God has somehow endowed with a spiritual understanding of His word in such a way that he can speak it with authority in instances where others are still uncertain about it. He will never be a man that will build for himself; he will build for the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul never built anything for himself, but what he had built for the Lord Jesus Christ; he was so sure it was right, he dared any man or angel to speak anything different than what he had spoken. That was authority speaking, Holy Ghost authority.

ONLY BORN AGAIN ARE PERFECTED

Some people will say, I believe that any apostle would have to be a Jew, because those first ones were all Jews.

Please try to understand that when the nation of Israel rejected their Messiah, 1900 years ago; they opened the door for the fulfillment of all the prophecies that pertained to Gentile people who would be recipients of the grace of God. That is why we read Psalms 68:18. When the prophet David spoke by inspiration, "Thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men, YEA, FOR THE REBELLIOUS ALSO, that the Lord God might dwell among them," the REBELLIOUS ALSO, pertained to the Gentiles who would be heirs of God's great salvation. Gentiles had no inheritance under the law, for the law covenant was given to the nation of Israel only. Gentiles, in times past, had been rebellious, unclean aliens, cut off from the commonwealth of Israel, but now we have been made joint heirs with Jesus Christ through His precious shed blood; and therefore those gifts that Paul wrote about are for the grace age church, which is made up of people from every nation under heaven. The five fold ministry will not be limited to any certain nationality of people therefore, since the church is universal in scope. One thing I have always said though; the church will not be overstocked with true, God anointed, apostolic ministers. It may seem so, with all these various ones running around, claiming to be such, but they have not all been tried yet. You will remember that John was instructed to write to the church of Ephesus, "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy

patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and THOU HAST TRIED THEM WHICH SAY THEY ARE APOSTLES, and are not, and hast found them liars." (Rev. 2:2) That causes some to ask, How do you judge them, so you will know whether they are true apostles or not? There is only one way. That is by their teaching. No true apostle will be found teaching false doctrine. A true apostle will make the Bible come alive for those who are hungry for truth, and a false apostle will bring in confusion every time. It is up to each and every believer to make certain that they are sitting at the proper spiritual table, where they will be fed a true revelation from the word of God. Jesus made it very clear that His enemy the devil would sow tares (make believers) in the same field where His good seed was being sown, and that those tares would be present until the end of the age, when His reapers would gather them together to be burned; therefore we are to expect to have imitators among us for as long as we remain in this phase of our perfection. Furthermore, let me impress upon you the fact that only those who are truly born again, are being perfected; no one else can be. There are spiritual miscarriages, and spiritual abortions on every hand, for it is only those that have been baptized with the Holy Ghost, that are the born again believers, and you can only be born again, one time. The Methodists believe that a person can be saved today, lost tomorrow, and then saved

all over again, but you will not find the scriptures teaching any such as that. **IGNORANT AND UNLEARNED MEN**

One of the things that thrilled me so much when I first heard Bro. Branham preach, was when he took the old Calvinist doctrine, once saved, always saved, and made it come alive and line up with all other scriptures, for I had studied that, as a Methodist, and knew that it had to fit into the gospel, or it would not be in the Bible, and also predestination. Saints! Praise God! I want you to know, every doctrine that was taught in that early church: God intends for it to be taught in His Biblically restored church. That is what Paul meant in Ephesians 5, when he said that He (CHRIST JESUS) would present the church to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Spots, wrinkles, and blemishes are all products of natural man's handling of the gospel of Christ. Spots and blemishes are a result of false doctrine, and wrinkles are a result of going to sleep in your garment, but those whom God awakens, and cleanses by the washing of waters of the word of God: are predestined to sit at the marriage supper of the Lamb while the poor foolish virgins are giving their lives in martyrdom, during the great tribulation. Both the Wise Virgins and

the Foolish Virgins will be clean and pure going into the millennium, but where the Wise Virgins are washed clean by the revealed word and caught up to be with the Lord Jesus before the great tribulation: those Foolish Virgins will have to have a blood bath in order to get their salvation robes washed clean. (Rev. 7:9-17) But let us praise God for the fact that the foolish virgins are not lost souls, as many believe them to be. Also, we should praise God, because it does not require a seminary degree in order to get a true revelation of the word of God. Many of God's chosen vessels, even as far back as the days of the first church age, were looked upon by the educated folks as ignorant and unlearned men. That is how they look upon anyone who is unable to use their big words. I am well aware that my vocabulary is not acceptable to them, but I just praise God that it is acceptable to Him. That reminds me of something I heard a few years ago. A man from South Africa was telling about having a street meeting with a group of Full Gospel Business Men; I believe it was in L.A. California. He said, when he had finished preaching, and turned the service back to the local man in charge: this local man who was host to the gathering looked out into the crowd of people, and saw one of the prominent preachers of the city there in the crowd. Out of courtesy, he invited him to come to the microphone, and dismiss them with prayer. He was a well educated man, with his many

degrees: therefore he opened his mouth with Heavenly Father, and began to go through his vocabulary of big words, and just then, one of those hard shelled bugs flew right into the man's mouth. He gagged, and strangled, and coughed, and that was the end of his prayer. I never will forget what this brother from South Africa said about it, He said, that was God's way of saying Shut up; I do not listen to that type of prayer. I do not tell this to belittle anyone. But it is a shame that we live in an age when men think that God is moved by all their carnal, intellectual verbal phrases. You may buy some people with that, but you will not buy a true Holy Ghost filled child of God with it. It is the same way with all the various things that Bro. Branham made dual statements about. Some will try to reconcile both statements, and say that they believe them both, but those who are truly filled with the Holy Ghost will just simply go to the word of God to see for themselves which version is right, and they will do it without losing confidence in God's chosen messenger to this age. God allowed those dual statements then, so they could be used later, to separate the chaff and husks from the true grain.

IN HARMONY WITH THE
SCRIPTURES

Brothers and sisters: we have not yet seen much of what we are dealing with in this message. That is, the true apostolic ministry moving freely among the universal body of Christ. We have come a long way since Martin Luther began protesting that Catholic dogma, and I truly believe we are the generation that will live to see the church brought to perfection, but there are yet many things to be revealed to her by the Spirit of God, through His chosen ministry, ordained for this hour. There is not one thing that any of us can do to hasten the Lord's coming, and believe me: He is not going to come for His bride before she has been perfected, but He is the one that regulates all of that. All any of us can do is just be ready to move when God says, Move. Now that perfection that we speak of, is not something that makes a person so super; do not picture it like that. Rather, it is that state of having our lives brought into complete harmony with the scriptures. We can still lose teeth, get grey hair, have our fingers turn blue when they are hit with a hammer, get older and even lose the rest of our hair, but that perfection will cause the inner man to be like Jesus, in attitude, revelation and conduct. There will not be a lot of stragglers as this thing winds down toward the end, for the ministry will be working from within the body universally. There will not be any need for an earthly bishop, for Christ Himself is the head of the body, the shepherd and bishop of our souls, and the high priest that continues

to make intercession for us even to this very moment, for He is still on the mercy seat. Now some have the idea that if we are as close to the end as it seems we are, something had better start happening right away. Let me say this, When the time is right, God can make a fast work of whatever is left to be done. He is still a miracle working God.

SPIRITUAL WEAPONS

Back in October 1966, I asked a Jewish Rabbi this question, Do you believe the Jews will ever get the holy city back? His reply was, Many of the Orthodox Jews believe that the Jewish people will get it back, before the coming of the Messiah, but I have to say, If we are going to get it back, it will require a miracle. Even though it was obvious that he was a conservative, he was right about one thing, the miracle, but our God is a miracle working God. I say, if God can do a miracle like that, and the effects be felt by so many people who live in the realm of guns, planes, tanks, explosives of every sort; then just think what He can do for a people whose battle is not in the carnal realm. Our weapons are not carnal, but rather, spiritual. We are pressing toward a total spiritual victory, but do not try to run ahead of God. Israel could not have produced that 6 day war, 60 years in advance; it had to be

at the exact time when God's purpose brought it about. It will be the same with God's five fold ministry; they will not reach their peak until time progresses to the place where God is ready for the next phase of His great redemption plan. We must face facts; there just simply is no way to hasten the rapture of the bride of Christ. You could get a group of people together, play fast music, shout, pray and dance until they all feel like the Lord should come for them just any minute, but none of them will get any higher than they can jump; and that will be only momentary. On the other hand, when God's time is right, those who are ready will not have to be passing out tracts, praying, nor any other certain thing; they could be sleeping. I know this goes contrary to a lot of preconceived ideas of how things ought to be done, but it is high time we turn loose of those things we carried with us from Babylon. Presently, the ministry that God has set in the church is leading the little bride into a Biblical knowledge and understanding of His will and purpose for each life, and when they reach the hour where they take complete charge of the situation, it will be with a vision that God has placed within their hearts. In that hour, they will not care what the world thinks: each man will have a job to do for Jesus, and he will know that the time is short.

DIRECTIONS COME FROM THE HEAD

God's objective is, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. (We are reading from Ephesians 4, so with Christ as the head, and the Holy Ghost as the channel through which revelation is dropped down to the body, of which the ministry is a part of; notice verse 16, how perfection takes hold to accomplish God's purpose.) From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Paul uses this illustration, paralleling the body of Christ with the human body, in order to impress upon us just exactly what scriptural perfection is. In the human body, every member is uniquely fastened together, so that in a normal body every member works harmoniously with every other member, doing what God designed the human body to do in the earth. Every member gets its instructions from the head, and everything that is done is for the good of the whole body. There is

no jealousy among the members of the human body, and you will never find them scrapping over which one will do what; they every one function in their own place, in complete harmony, according to the signal that come down from the head. Think about this, and when you do truly see how perfectly this human body functions, with every member exactly where it belongs, and doing what it was designed to do, then you can see what perfection in the body of Christ is. That is why it is absolutely necessary for every member of the true body of Christ to take on the mind of Christ, stop striving for some other member's place, and settle down in the place that God has given to you. If you are to be exalted in any way, let God do it. If you strive to be exalted, trying to fit into some other person's place, you will no doubt be brought down with shame. God is working this thing out so perfectly that when His true church really begins to shine with this kind of unity, and oneness of mind and purpose; He will not leave her here very long for carnal men to tamper with. She will be ready for her flight. Where did anyone ever get the idea that Jesus would leave His perfected bride here on earth? What would be the purpose? It is only carnal man that sees the perfected bride of Christ on a great campaign, casting out devils, healing the sick, and raising the dead in a great revival sweep around this old world. The Bible does not teach any such thing as that. When the body is fitly joined together and compacted by that

which every joint supplieth: it will be for the edifying of itself in love. In the meantime we are to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, just like Paul said he was doing. (Phil. 3:14)

EVERY MEMBER FUNCTIONS

When the ministry has nothing but a true vision from the Lord, the head, so they, themselves are able to see, the body in return cannot help but see the Lord Jesus, the head, through their ministry. That is my way of saying, Everything that they build will be for the Lord. In such an atmosphere as that, those who are in the pews cannot help but begin to grow into healthy, vigorous persons, who in return will contribute something for the good of the overall body. At various times, the individual members will contribute something from the realm of the Holy Ghost, that will definitely show the Spirit of God is working for each and every person's edification, and all within the scope of genuine love. In other words, we will not come to church just to have the preacher edify us; we will be conscious of the fact that the body needs each and every member, functioning in their own particular place, and if there is a particular need in my life, it will not necessarily be one of the preachers that deals with it. The Holy Ghost will

move through someone in the congregation, to say, Bro. Jackson: You have been troubled about so and so. In a dream, I saw thus and so, and I saw how it has been affecting you. This is just a little example to call your attention to the fact that the whole body will be involved in edifying itself, in spite of the fact that so many theologians claim all those things ceased 1900 years ago. I will not argue the point as to whether the gifts of the Spirit ceased to operate in the church or not; that is not what this message is about. We are dealing with scriptures that let us know beyond any shadow of doubt, that the plan of God for His church did not cease. He is restoring everything that the original church had, and when the end time element of the church has everything that those first believers had, it will lead them into a realm of the Spirit that those of the first age never attained. They had no need to; for they were destined to lie in the ground until this last phase of God's plan is completed.

THIRTY - SIXTY - AND HUNDRED FOLD

Verse 7, of our text, takes us back to Matthew 13:8. Listen. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." God did not give all of us the same measure

of the Spirit of Christ. Speaking in a quantity sense, He did not give all of us a gallon. He gave to each of us according to our several ability. (Matt. 25:15). He did not give me any more of the Holy Ghost, nor any less than I needed. If there are times in life, when I seem not to have enough: that is my fault. It is not the absence of the Holy Ghost; it is the fact that I have not fully yielded to Him. He gives us our measure according to our ability; therefore we will never have more than we need, nor will we ever be shortchanged, and all spent out. His grace is sufficient for every hour, for every need, in every situation. This measure, that we are considering, fits right into the second parable of Matthew 13, how some brought forth an hundred fold, and some sixty fold, and some thirty fold. Brothers and sisters: you do not graduate from a thirty fold Christian to a sixty fold, and then on to a hundred fold. If you start out as a thirty fold believer, you will always be a thirty fold, because that is what God sees you to be. God deals with your life on the merits of what He sees your ability to be. Now please understand, We are not talking about salvation, we are talking about the measure of the Spirit of God that will be manifested through each believer. A thirty fold believer is just as much saved as the hundred fold believer; this is strictly dealing with the ability of the individual person to exercise the gift of the Spirit of God in his life. Doctrinally, the thirty fold will believe

the same as the hundred fold, but I will say this, There will not be any thirty fold preachers. Now, that should not offend anyone. It just literally means that some people are slower in understanding the things of Christ to the point of working out their problems. Many times, the hundred fold Christians have more trouble understanding the grace of God working in the thirty and sixty fold Christians than they do about other things. It would help every one of us to be a little more fruitful in our daily lives, if we would just realize that there are measures of the Spirit of God among us, and that we are not all expected to advance at the same rate in our statural growth. The thirty fold Christian will definitely be a slower type person in working out his or her problems, but if you watch them long enough, you will see the grace of God reach down and get hold of the situation, and they will come right on along, and fulfill their part in the body. Every joint supplying, according to the effectual working in the MEASURE of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. That is what we are talking about.

EDIFYING ONE ANOTHER

Paul puts a lot of emphasis on this thing of edifying one another, and I am sure that most of you, at least, know

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why. To edify is to encourage, and there are times when we need to be encouraged, regardless of who we may be. There are times when the devil has dealt you a hard blow during the week, and you come to church feeling so badly beaten. You would like to say, Praise the Lord! But you can hardly open your mouth. I am sure we all know the feeling, but, Praise God, I am also sure that we do not have to continue like that for ever, if we are truly walking with God, for somewhere along the line: the Holy Ghost will move upon someone to encourage and lift you up. When you begin to feel lifted up in your heart, your situation falls under a new light. The devil may not give up right then, but the Holy Ghost that is in you is greater than all the problems he can heap upon you. That is why Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13)

MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT

Let us go to the 12th chapter of 1st Corinthians now where we will see more of what Paul is dealing with here in Eph. 4. In his Ephesian letter, he deals primarily with the ministry, and shows what that ministry will lead the body into, but back over in his Corinthian letter, we find the 9 gifts of

the spirit, and how they are to work in the body of believers. These 9 gifts are all different from each other, and he specifically mentions that there are differences of administrations, but it is the same Lord that works through each and every one of them, and it is all for the benefit of the universal body of Christ. Certainly we understand that the gift of healing is not going to create the same effect as the gift of prophecy. Therefore we would have to say that the administration is designed by God to accomplish His objective. In verse 6, he says, "And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." The anointing on one person, for one gift, will not be the same anointing that is on someone else for another gift, but regardless of what the anointing is for, it is always God who sovereignly inspires His children and anoints them to respond. Verse 7, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." Brothers and sisters: That is a positive fact. Everyone that has ever been baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Ghost, has that potential lying there within, to be used by the Lord in any of the gifts of the Spirit. You may be 60 years old, and never yet manifested any of the gifts, but if you live to see the hour that God has perfected His church, Biblically, something is going to cause a spark within your soul that will bring it about, for Paul said that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to EVERY MAN. Naturally that does

not pertain to every person in the true body of Christ, and the “profit withal,” pertains to the fact that whatever the Holy Ghost does through that person will not only benefit that individual, but it will also benefit the whole body of believers. When this thing gets to working in complete harmony with the will and purpose of God, you will not find the ministry doing all of the ministering to the body; it will be more like it was when Ananias ministered to Saul, after his encounter with the Lord, on the road to Damascus. In other words, what we must see, is that the gifts of the Spirit are for the whole body; not just the ministry. Then we must realize that they are for the edifying and strengthening of the whole body including the ministry. Do not think it strange when you come into the assembly and hear some sister prophesying. Though I realize there are those who would scalp me for saying such a thing: It is true nevertheless. Phillip had four virgin daughters that prophesied. (You can find that in Acts 21:8 & 9.) Therefore I ask you, Where do you suppose they did their prophesying, out in the corn field? Absolutely not; it was in the church. Do not ever think that Paul’s terminology, “EVERY MAN,” limited the gifts of the Spirit to the MALE MEMBERS of the body of Christ. For what he meant, he could have said EVERY PERSON. When he spoke of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, he was speaking only of men, for the Bible does not

authorize women to function in these offices, but when he spake of the gifts of the Spirit, there was no sex stipulation. Let us read a few more verses, here, picking up with verse 8, “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another various kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.” (OR TO EVERY MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.)

RULING AUTHORITY
BELONGS TO MEN

Remember, God is sovereign. He does not have to ask you and me whether we believe a thing is right, or not. He just states how it is, and it is up to every believer to fall in line with it. That is what it means to be a believer. But let me be sure every one of you understand that Raymond Jackson DID NOT SAY that it was alright for women to preach, teach, nor have authority over men. When it comes to prophesy, tongues and interpretation,

and the exercise of these gifts, they are all to be judged by the word of God, for every true gift of the Spirit will line right up with God's word. You will not find a true gift of prophecy, contradicting what you know to be revelation truth. As far as God's sovereignty is concerned, He can, and does give dreams and visions to people who are not even Christians. Take Pontius Pilate's wife for instance. She was no more than a pagan woman. Yet she had a terrible dream that caused her to warn her husband not to have anything to do with the crucifixion of Jesus. If God wants to get a message to the world, many times, this is the only type of person that they will listen to. Another instance was where a woman living here in the New Albany area dreamed of a terrible volcano condition out in the Northwest, maybe a year before it actually came to pass. The Courier Journal printed the article, but did not say whether the woman was a Christian or not. When Christians tell dreams and visions to the world, they usually will say, That is just another one of those fanatics, but when one of their own, or someone who is not identified tells of something like that, people of the world will take notice. Perhaps that is the only warning that some of those people in that area ever got, or ever will get. But the point is, God knows how to deal with people, whether they are saved or lost. He knows how to perfect praise from the lips of the saints, and He also knows how to cause the man of the world to

say, That had to be God directing such and such, as they did after that tornado passed through this area 6 or 7 years ago, destroying so much property, yet killing only a very few people. You could hear them on the news telecasts say, We were spared by the hand of God. That did not mean that they had become, or ever would become Christians, but they did recognize the hand of God.

LIVE IN THE SPIRIT

Before closing this subject dealing with the gifts of the Spirit, I would like for us to look at the 12th chapter of Romans for a few minutes. You will never see the full magnitude of what we are dealing with until God has a people on earth that has sold out for truth, a people that cherishes truth, like a treasure, but let us listen to Paul's words to the assembly in Rome. Verse 3, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, (Paul is relying upon the fact that the grace of God in his own life had given him a little insight of the goodness of God in the lives of others.) To every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." That measure of faith given to every one of us by the Holy Ghost, should make us humble, and cause us to realize that

whatever we may attain to in this life is only by the grace that God has bestowed upon our unworthy souls. We certainly do not have anything to become puffed up and proud about. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophesy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of faith." Alright, We are all members in particular of the body of Christ and we do not all have the same office; therefore we ought not even try to be just like brother or sister so and so; we need to let God have complete control of our lives in order for Him to exercise us in our calling. I have been in places where everyone wanted to preach on divine healing, or on the power that the Holy Ghost gives ever believer, but as I look back at the ministry of that first age: I do not see them doing any such thing as that. You check up on Paul, Peter, James, John, or any of those early Christians, and you will see that their main theme was, how to walk with God in truth, how to be led by the Spirit, how to live in the Spirit, and such like. If we learn to live in the Spirit, we do not need sermons on divine healing, or how to become materially rich and drive Cadillacs instead of Fords. We receive those natural benefits that God has supplied, just by living close to Him. Now some people think walking or living in the

Spirit is to walk around with their eyes closed, and have the Spirit say, Take 3 steps to the right, then turn left, and so one. That is not it at all. Living in the Spirit is just simply, not straying from the word of God. Seeking the will of God first is the key. Since we do not all have the same office, and since we have different gifts, we just need to commit ourselves into the hands of God and allow Him to use us as He desires for the benefit of the body. When you know that you have a genuine anointing: Do not draw back; let God use it.

RIGHT ACTS - WRONG MOTIVE

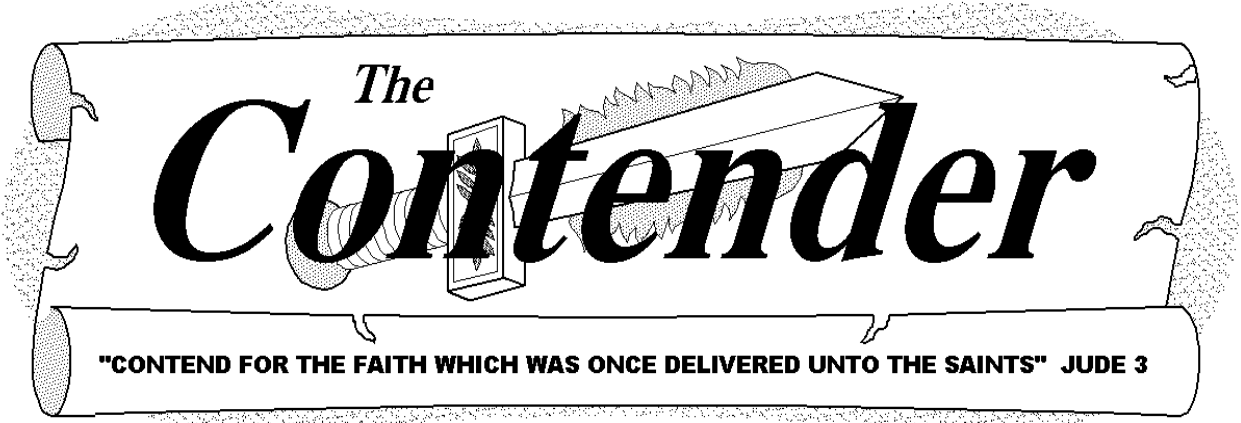
If you have a gift for ministering, Paul says, Wait on your ministering. Do not try to minister without the anointing. It is the same with teaching and exhorting, and if you have a ministry of giving, then keep it simple, and with a right motive and attitude. There is a right and a wrong way in every area of life. You can even do right things with the wrong motives, and miss the perfect will of God completely. I think of men like Oral Roberts that used to have such an anointing of God in his ministry. Back in the 50's, he could preach for an hour to an hour and a half, in an old tent, sweat, take off his neck tie, and then pray for the sick, and

God would heal many of them. I have heard many testimonies that came out of those meetings. That was before he had a university, and all those other material involvements that have no doubt been the cause of him forsaking the word of God he used to preach. After being in the battle field against the adversary all those years, it is a terrible thing when men just sell out for materialism. No wonder Jesus said, or will say, Depart from me, ye that work iniquity, I never knew you. The criticize Bro. Branham and try to destroy his image because of all the foolishness that some have attached to him as they perverted the truth he stood for. He did not leave behind a hospital, nor a university, nor a faith city, but he did leave behind a revelation of truth that is helping put together a building for the Lord Jesus Christ. I praise God for that! Don't you? I realize it takes a certain amount of the material things in life, no matter who we are, but I have always felt that we should leave our material provisions in the hands of God, and give our time and attention to the ministry He has called us to, and I believe that is according to the teaching of the apostle Paul who wrote, I believe it is 14, of the 27 books of the New Testament. He wrote those letters only after he had gone out into the Arabian desert and waited upon his ministry, just like he wrote to the Romans. He was no novice; he had the mind of God. What he said about ruling with diligence in verse 8, pertains to helps and governments

which he mentioned in 1st Cor. 12:28, in dealing with offices in the body of Christ.

THE CHURCH WILL LIVE AGAIN

God has set in the church these various offices we have been dealing with, in this message on the gifts; and every one of these offices are to remain in the body for the purpose of perfecting that body until it reaches full stature in every aspect of the makeup of Jesus Christ. Likewise the gifts of the Spirit shall remain also, for what would those offices be, without the gifts of the Spirit? But, Saints: Let us endeavor to keep everything in its proper order, and whatever we do, whether in word or deed, let us do it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the glory of God, without selfish motivation. The church will live again, just like Ezekiel's dry bones, but she will not turn the world upside down as some believe; she will have leaving on her mind. Praise God! Let us live true to His word. Amen.



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