

# The Contender

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

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## The Body Of Christ, Part 1



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THERE IS SOMETHING GOING ON IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW, THAT CAUSES ME TO FEEL IMPRESSED TO DEAL WITH A MESSAGE WE WILL TITLE, "THE BODY OF CHRIST." THE THING I AM REFERRING TO: IN ONE WAY, IT IS HID TO THE WORLD, AND YET IN ANOTHER WAY, IT IS NOT. YOU WILL SEE WHAT I

MEAN, AS WE GO ALONG. WE HAVE ALL BEEN MADE VERY MUCH AWARE OF THE GREAT FAMINE IN ETHIOPIA, AND HOW UNTOLD THOUSANDS OF THEM ARE SUFFERING, AND DYING OF STARVATION, AND HOW VARIOUS EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO RELIEVE THE SITUATION. BUT THE THING THAT REALLY BEGAN TO GET MY ATTENTION, WAS WHAT I HAVE BEEN READING AND HEARING ABOUT THE JEWISH ELEMENT, AND HOW THEY ARE BEING AFFECTED. THOUSANDS OF THEM HAVE FLED TO THE COUNTRY OF SUDAN, WITH THE HOPE OF FINDING SOMETHING TO HELP, AND NOW WE LEARN THAT ISRAEL HAS TAKEN IT UPON THEMSELVES TO BRING ABOUT A MASSIVE AIRLIFT, TO BRING THEM TO ISRAEL. THEY WERE TRYING TO KEEP IT HID FROM THE WORLD, AND ESPECIALLY FROM ETHIOPIA

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AND THE ARABS, FOR ETHIOPIA IS ALREADY UNDER A COMMUNIST FORM OF GOVERNMENT, AND YOU ALL KNOW HOW THE ARABS FEEL ABOUT JEWS. BUT THE NEWS MEDIA GOT HOLD OF THE STORY, AND BLEW THE WHOLE OPERATION, LEAVING AROUND 1700 MORE, YET TO BE BROUGHT OUT. ISRAEL WAS USING THE BELGIAN AIR LINES FOR THE OPERATION, AND WHEN THE SPOTLIGHT WAS TURNED UPON THEM, THE WHOLE THING HAD TO BE SOMEWHAT CURTAILED. NEVERTHELESS ISRAEL IS DETERMINED TO GET THE REST OF THEM OUT OF THERE, AND TO ISRAEL. (THIS MESSAGE WAS STARTED DURING THAT TIME.) THESE PARTICULAR JEWS REFER TO THEMSELVES AS BEING OF THE TRIBE OF DAN, AND I AM CONVINCED, THEY KNOW MORE ABOUT THAT, THAN YOU AND I KNOW. JUST REMEMBER, THOSE TEN TRIBES WERE CARRIED AWAY INTO CAPTIVITY IN THE YEAR 728 B.C., SO THEY HAVE HAD PLENTY OF TIME TO MIGRATE THE WORLD OVER. REMEMBER ALSO, THIS NATION OF AMERICA IS ONLY 500 YEARS OLD, FROM THE TIME IT WAS DISCOVERED, AND LOOK WHAT

ALL HAS HAPPENED IN THAT 500 YEARS, SO DO NOT QUESTION WHAT COULD HAPPEN IN 2600 YEARS. (YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN, THAT IS A LONG TIME.) BUT THAT IS NOT THE END OF WHAT WE ARE LOOKING AT, FOR FROM INDIA, CAME THE CRY OF ANOTHER 7000 JEWS, THAT WANT TO COME HOME, AND AN OFFICIAL FROM THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION WAS SENT TO WORK OUT IMMIGRATION PROBLEMS FOR THEM. THEY CLAIM TO BE OF THE TRIBE OF MANESSAH, AND THEIR RECORDS SHOW THAT THEY MIGRATED INTO BURMA IN THE 1700'S FROM CHINA, AND SO ON. IT IS VERY STRANGE, THERE WAS AN ARTICLE IN THE JERUSALEM POST ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO, TELLING ABOUT THE DAYS OF THE SETTLING OF OUR WEST, AND HOW IT WAS LEARNED THAT SOME OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE THAT CAME HERE, HAD A JEWISH TORAH SCROLL.

SOME OF YOU MAY HAVE READ STORIES ABOUT THE BUILDING OF RAILROADS OUT WEST, AND HOW CALIFORNIA, AT THAT TIME WAS ALREADY SETTLED, AND HOW MANPOWER TO WORK ON RAILROADS WAS VERY SCARCE. VERY FEW

WANTED TO WORK ON RAILROADS. THEREFORE THEY SENT TO THE ORIENTS FOR WORKERS, AND THEY CAME BY THE THOUSANDS, AND MOST OF THEM NEVER DID GO BACK. THAT IS HOW SO MANY CHINESE CAME TO BE AMONG THE EARLY SETTLERS OUT WEST. BUT THESE PARTICULAR ONES THAT HAD THE TORAH SCROLL, CLAIMED TO BE FROM A PROVINCE IN CHINA, THAT HAD BEEN CONVERTED TO JUDAISM, BY THE JEWS THAT LIVED THERE, AND I BELIEVE THEY SAID IT WAS IN THE 1700'S. THIS MAN THAT WROTE THAT ARTICLE IN THE JERUSALEM POST, HAD MADE A TRIP TO A MUSEUM OUT WEST HERE, WHERE THAT TORAH SCROLL FINALLY ENDED UP, AND THAT IS WHY HE WROTE THE ARTICLE AT THE TIME HE DID. WELL ANYHOW, MY POINT IS THIS, THOSE TEN TRIBES HAVE MIGRATED ALL OVER THE WORLD IN THE 2600 YEARS OF THEIR DISPERSION, AND ACCORDING TO HOSEA, THEY WERE NEVER TO RETURN BACK TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL, AS TRIBES, UNTIL THE END TIME, JUST BEFORE THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH. I JUST THOUGHT TO MYSELF, AS I READ THAT STORY, WITH ISRAEL'S ECONOMY IN THE SHAPE IT IS IN, THEY HAVE TO HAVE HELP

FROM A FRIENDLY NATION, OR NATIONS, IN ORDER TO GET THESE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF JEWS BACK INTO THEIR NATION. BUT WE DO KNOW, THAT IF WE ARE TRULY LIVING JUST BEFORE THE WINDUP OF GENTILE TIME, WE HAVE TO EXPECT GOD TO WORK IN WORLD CONDITIONS, TO BRING ABOUT WHATSOEVER IS TO BE DONE BEFORE THOSE TWO JEWISH PROPHETS APPEAR ON THE SCENE IN ISRAEL. THEY ARE NOT GOING TO HAVE TO STAND AROUND AND WAIT FOR THOUSANDS OF JEWS TO BE BROUGHT HOME, SO THEY CAN PROPHECY TO THEM, TO FULFILL REVELATION 7, AND REVELATION 14. EVERY REPRESENTATIVE OF THOSE TWELVE TRIBES, THAT ARE TO BE SEALED BY THEIR MINISTRY, WILL ALREADY BE THERE. NEVERTHELESS WE NEED TO BE AWARE OF WHAT IS TAKING PLACE, FOR EVEN THOUGH THE WORLD KNOWS ABOUT IT, THEY HAVE NO CONCEPT OF THE SCRIPTURAL FULFILLMENT IN THESE VARIOUS THINGS. JUDAH AND BENJAMIN HAVE BEEN THE TWO TRIBES THAT HAVE MORE OR LESS HUNG TOGETHER THROUGH TIME. THEY ARE THE ONES THAT SETTLED IN EUROPE, AND THAT HAVE BEEN MAINLY REPRESENTED IN THE NATION OF ISRAEL SINCE THEY

HAVE HAD THEIR LAND BACK, OR AT LEAST PART OF IT BACK. ANYHOW SAINTS: WE SURELY HAVE TO BE LIVING CLOSE TO THE END, BUT THE WORLD IS ASLEEP, AS FAR AS THE SIGNS OF IT ARE CONCERNED. I CANNOT HELP BUT BELIEVE, THAT GOD IS GOING TO ALLOW SOME CATASTROPHIC SHAKING TAKE PLACE, THAT WILL CAUSE A LOT OF ATHEISTS TO WISH THEY HAD NEVER BEEN BORN, AND ESPECIALLY REGRET SOME OF THE TEXT BOOKS THEY HAVE WRITTEN.

### **FACTS ABOUT RELIGION**

Brothers and Sisters: I want us to look at some scriptures, and consider some things that are going to affect the Church before she leaves here in the rapture. I have said many times, We have never yet seen the true church of Jesus Christ in action. But when I say that: Do not think that I am talking about some great earth shattering development in the Church. The Church will always be a people in the minority category, yet I do believe God will work a work that will allow the world in general to know who the true children of God are. Even though they have called them heretics, and cults, and all of that, they are going to see, before the end, who really has the favor of God. Religion in general, doctrinally tries to calculate certain things that are to take place, but they

are as far from reality, as the Jews were, in trying to place Isaiah and Malachi, according to their Judaistic traditions and doctrines. In other words, even as religious as they were, God did what His prophets had foretold that He would do, and Judaism missed it. Likewise religion as a whole will miss what God does in these last days, for they are expecting Him to work according to their traditions, and He is going to work according to His word. There are literally millions of Gentile people, that are dedicated to some kind of church program, but they are no more dedicated to God, than a lost sinner out here in the world. In fact, they will fight God, for when you fight against revealed truth, that is exactly what you are doing. When you reject truth, you are rejecting God, whether you are willing to admit it or not.

### **JESUS CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH**

I will finally get to our text scriptures in 1st Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 12, in a minute, if you want to be opening to it. But let us be aware of the fact that the body of Christ we are going to talk about, is not just a physical man. Jesus Himself was a perfect physical man, and millions of people only saw a man, but we are going to look at something that goes beyond what the one physical man was. When the Church was born, on the day of Pentecost, thousands of Jews saw that 120 disciples that came

out of the upper room, speaking in tongues and glorifying God, but the greater majority failed to see anything at all, that would make them want to become a part of what was taking place. So is it also today. Nevertheless three thousand souls did see something that made them want to shed those shackles of tradition and unbelief, and they stepped up to Peter and the others, and said, Men and brethren, what must we do? They were pricked in their hearts, convicted by what they had just heard, yet you would have to admit that every one of them were already religious, so what was the difference? They were at Jerusalem because they were religious. They were doing all they knew to do, but they did not have closed minds, like those other thousands had, so God was able to deal with them, and show them some truth that they had not seen before. At least not with a spiritual eye. Therefore as Paul uses the term body of Christ, he is referring to the functioning of something that goes beyond what the natural minded man is able to comprehend. It takes the Holy Ghost to cause the individual members of this body to function, and there is no way that natural minded men can duplicate the true functioning of this body that actually ministers on the behalf of Jesus Christ Himself. Where do they get the authority to do that? From Jesus Himself. In John 14:12, Jesus said, "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than

these shall he do: because I go unto my Father.” But we do not work as individuals apart from everyone else; we work as a body; some doing one thing, and others something else, but all in unity. Jesus Himself, was a person the invisible God could talk to and talk through. God used all the faculties of that perfect man for the last 3 ½ years of His physical walk among men, and some saw something, and others saw nothing. Then when He was ready to go away, He said to the disciples, concerning the Holy Ghost, the Comforter that was to come (John 16:14-16,) “He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He (the Holy Ghost) shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.” The church world reads that verse, or these verses, and never sees a thing. But the truth is, when the Holy Ghost came to the Church, on the day of Pentecost, He came carrying every attribute of the character of Jesus Christ, and every manifestation that had been exemplified in the personal ministry of the physical man Himself. In other words, When Jesus ascended to glory, to be high priest, He would not be a prophet any longer. Neither would he heal the sick, and raise the dead any more; but He did commit every bit of that to the Church, through the enablement of the Holy Ghost. When

the Holy Ghost is present, everything that Jesus did, is a potential in our midst, but these churches that do not believe He is any longer in the picture, are as void of the power of God as they could possibly be. Oh they claim to have the Spirit of God, but their very attitude and actions, prove beyond any shadow of doubt, that they do not. Some of them deny the supernatural power of God in our day, and others want no part of God except the supernatural, miracle working part, and they are both void of the reality of God, for He is as He always was; it is just that His purpose in doing certain things is different than it was some two thousand years ago. I just have to say, The world is going to hell, and much of what is called “The Church,” is going right along with it, and except for the grace and mercy of God, we would be too. But because of His grace and mercy in allowing us to see truth, and walk in it, He is molding us into vessels of honor, even into the very image of His only begotten Son. But my real point is this, If Jesus the Christ, was a vessel that the invisible God could be seen through, so also is His church. It reflects something that the world cannot see. Did not Jesus say, Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me, for I will be with you, even in you? How would He be with us, even in us? By His Spirit, of course. The same Spirit that was in Him, is now in the church, (His body) doing the very same things. That is why Paul used this

particular terminology to describe the function of the church, yet many people wrestle with the simplicity of it, and become very technical and legalistic.

### **JESUS' MANY MEMBERED** **BODY**

Let us read 1st Corinthians 12:12 now. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." We will read some more later, but let us look at something here first. The body is one body, made up of many members. We have two sets of four fingers and a thumb attached to two members called hands, and they are attached to two poles called arms, and so on, but all of these together make up only one body. Paul uses this illustration to show what the mystical body of Christ is made up of. Every individual person who is born of the Spirit of God, is compared to some member of the natural human body, for all members do not perform the same function, just like all members of our human body do not perform the same function. Every member of the body of Christ has their particular place and function, in order for the body to fulfill its calling upon earth. Paul is not saying that Jesus Christ is many people; he is only saying that the body

that becomes His mystical representation on earth, is made up of many individual people, through which the Holy Spirit exemplifies Jesus Christ Himself, in character, attitude, motive and purpose. God instills in us, through a revelation of His word, something that causes us to take our place in representing our blessed Lord, in this evil age of perversion and ungodliness. Education and worldly prestige do not represent the living Christ, as many would like to believe. It takes a dedicated heart, and a life of simplicity to do that. I am not against education; but it is of very little spiritual benefit, to those who major in it. In one sense, you could say; It takes an uneducated person to truly humble themselves, and accept the simplicity of the gospel. No I am not saying what it may sound like I am, for God can save kings and potentates of every sort, but how many such people do you know of, who are willing to count all of their worldly achievements as nothing, in order to follow Christ in a revelation of truth? You can memorize every verse of scripture in the Bible, and still miss God completely. Judiastic Jews could quote the Torah, and recite memorized prayers all day long, but when the one whom all that should have been pointing to, came upon the scene, they cried, Crucify him! Crucify him! That sort, could never be in the body of Christ, for they are of that other spirit.

**EVERY MEMBER IS**  
**IMPORTANT**

Notice verse 13 now. “For by one Spirit we are baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; or have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” This scripture was written before the Church ever went into the Dark Age period. At that time, Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists and all of that, had never been thought of. It is true, the church was made up of people from many religious backgrounds, some from Judaism, and others from different forms of paganism, but when they obeyed the gospel, they all came the same way. There were no cheap ways offered, in those days. It is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that puts us in the body of Christ, and there is no other way to get in. The Holy Ghost is that same Spirit that was in Christ, only in the Church, it is working to reconcile lost mankind back to God. It is by that Spirit in us, that God is able to mold us into the image of His only begotten Son, so that, in the end, it can truly be said, He (Jesus) is the firstborn among many brethren. He was the firstborn of the family of God, but the rest of that family is looked upon as one body, and that body has a function, a duty to perform. We have to look at this, as the apostle Paul saw it, in that apostolic age. We do not get into that one body by having some priest place

a little wafer on our tongue; we are baptized (immersed) into it by the Holy Ghost. Every individual has had their own particular experience with God, and it is God Himself who gives the experience. The gospel came to the Jews first, but every Jew, and every Gentile got into the body of Christ the same way, by the baptism of the Spirit of God. That is why Paul also wrote, In Christ, we are not respected because of our race, or color of skin, or who baptized us; it is the blood of Jesus Christ that makes the difference. In other words, Now that the Gentiles have been included, no certain ones have any priority. All must come the same way, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free. Then he says, “For the body is not one member, but many,” and then goes into various illustrations to make his point clear. Some people sit in the church for years, claiming to be Christians, but never really gaining any confidence in God. You will hear them say, God would never do such and such for me, for I am just no good. I just have to say, to such people, What are you doing here then? Does that sound cruel? I have to talk like that, in order to open up some minds. Do not sit in the church forty years, saying, I am no good, I don’t know why God saved me. That is not the Christian life. God did not save us, to push us back into a corner, so to speak. He does not push our face in the mud every day; that is the devil that does that. He is the one that constantly tries to defeat every Christian, rob you of your joy, and

keep you from fulfilling your place in the body of Christ. That is why Paul went ahead to say, "If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not the body; is it therefore not of the body?" It is true, the foot is not as pretty to look at, as the hand. But does the hand bear the burden the foot bears? Is the body complete, without the feet? Of course not, and neither is the body of Christ complete without you, if you are truly ordained to this great salvation. Oh yes, you may get more abuse than someone else, but think of this, Is it your right hand, or your foot, that runs into the door at night? Some of you know what I am talking about; it hurts something awful. But you must realize also, when your foot suffers, the whole body suffers, for no member of your body stands apart from all the others, and neither is it so, in the body of Christ. Therefore when Paul speaks of the foot saying thus and so, he is comparing it to those insignificant feeling saints who are always running themselves down; Who am I, that God would ever do anything for? You just have to realize, God did not save you because you were handsome. He was not looking at your nose, nor your feet; he was looking at your soul. Therefore in the eyes of God, you are important, and He will not withhold any good thing from you, for any reason, except for your perfection. You just have to learn to trust Him. Should the foot feel unimportant, when the truth is, it is carrying the whole body? Saints: Are you getting the picture? You cannot

look at your inabilities, and justify your attitude, by saying, Well, I am just not as important to God as So and So. Maybe you are a toe on the foot: I do not know. But you must realize this, When the grace of God came to you, and convicted you of sin, and made you realize your need for Jesus Christ as your Savior, that was God's beginning point in your life. Therefore no matter how many times the devil knocks you down, you must get up, and say, Devil: I am going on. You must determine to tell the devil he is a liar. A toe can get hit, turn purple and swell up, but with a little time you will not even be able to tell it was ever hit.

### **EVERY MEMBER SUFFERS**

Is the hand always without hurt? How many of you have ever hit your finger with a hammer? Or have a door shut on one? Did it hurt? Did the whole body suffer? You know it did. Every member suffers at some point in time, but that has nothing whatsoever to do with the importance of that particular member. As far as beauty goes, I have always felt like, if people would spend as much time pampering their feet as they do their face and hands, they might have beautiful feet. But the point is, God is not looking at physical beauty. That has nothing at all to do with our function in the body of Christ. Every member of the body of Christ is

a person with a disposition, and if God has saved you, He will give you enough grace to overcome the devil. It is all in recognizing what God has done for you. He has set you in the body, and He has no plans for cutting you out. Some people are born with fewer capabilities than others, and in the secular world you are measured accordingly, but in the family of God, that makes no difference at all. God never asks anything from anyone unless He is willing to make that person capable of doing, or giving what He asks for. We just have to realize that there is a Creator behind every birth; therefore if we are bound by certain limitations, God knows all about it, and He will never require you to rise above those limitations. It is natural man, that makes those demands upon you, and tries to make you feel insecure and unimportant, because of it. In some of these church organizations, the moment they get you converted to their organization, they put you to work, and you never have a free moment again. They will work you half to death, always pushing you to do something else, whether you have any capabilities or leading in that direction or not. They keep you so worn out, you could not even hear what the preach had to say, even if he said anything worth hearing. In those places though, all you ever get is an old trinity popsicle shoved in your mouth, so you could never grow very much on that, even if you got it. What I am saying is, you can get so wrapped up in

church activity, you forget all about any true revelation of Jesus Christ. We should go to church to worship God and enjoy fellowship with each other, and to be fed with something we can grow on spiritually. Furthermore if everything is as it should be, the preacher can get as much out of what he has to say, as anyone else. Many times he will read a passage of scripture, not even knowing ahead of time what he is going to say, and the Holy Ghost just takes over. I like it, when it is like that, for you realize that you are not the preacher at all. The real preacher is in you. Saints: He not only wants to do that with the preacher, He also wants to do that with every individual child of His. I do not mean to say, He wants you all to preach; He wants to guide your lives in that very same way. He wants to teach you some things that does not necessarily need to come through your preacher. That is why it is wrong to try to program a worship service. We ought always to be subject to His leading. When you print up an order of service program, you have just slammed the door in the face of the Spirit of God, for God will not work within the limits of your preprinted programs. You may come to church with your mind in one direction, and the Spirit of God may take the service, and go in the opposite direction, if He is allowed to.

**SOME SOUND SPIRITUAL**  
**ADVICE**

I realize we cannot stay on the foot forever, in a message like this, but there just seems to be so much to say concerning these things, for that is exactly where so many people are today; always condemning themselves. God did not save you to cultivate an inferiority complex; He saved you to mold you into the image of His Son Jesus, the Christ. Many people are just simply bound by the characteristics of their old natures, because the devil will always try to get you to cultivate that, if he can. Brother: God wants to put a smile on your face, joy in your heart, and a song in your soul. Sure you are going to have trials; every true child of God does. But your trials are not for your destruction; they are for the testing and cultivation of what God desires to see in your life. Trials are never for your destruction; they are always for your benefit, even though they are hard on the flesh. Nevertheless if we can accept trials, and recognize them when they come, I will guarantee you one thing, God will never let you go 40 years of your life living a trial. Somewhere He will lift you above your trials, and allow you to see that there has been something accomplished through them. You will begin to have some confidence and stability, and be more apt to recognize God's goodness to you. Above all, do

not ever look back, except to count your blessings. If you look back at failures, you are only cultivating more failure. Do not live in the past, or you will always be defeated. You may make a mistake; this flesh is full of imperfections; but do not allow the devil to rob you because of it. When you realize your mistake, repent of it, commit it into the hands of your heavenly Father, and do not spend the next ten years looking back, belittling yourself for being such a failure. Look back, only to say, Thank you Lord. Every time I look in a mirror, I look back and say, Thank you Lord. I would not change this scar on my face, for it brought me to Christ. No I would never say, God give me another one, but every time I see this one, it reminds me that I could be six feet under the ground today, instead of here enjoying the goodness and mercy of God. For thirty some years, my soul has rejoiced in the mercy and grace of God, because He took that opportunity to turn me around. Oh yes. There have been days of disappointment, but oh, I praise God, because He brings us through every day, and teaches us not to live in the past. What happened yesterday, should not be the end of our goal, but rather, what lays beyond tomorrow. Therefore a foot is never to be looked upon as something unimportant. A foot in the body of Christ, is as important to God as a hand. Paul really covers a lot of every day reality in this Corinthian epistle, if we will just let it speak to us. Do you really appreciate the grace of

God, or are you guilty of complaining because you are not just exactly like someone else? Let us read the rest of these verses, and just notice what he is really emphasizing: the importance of every member of the body of Christ realizing that they have an important function in the overall picture of God's great redemption work. "And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath GOD SET THE MEMBERS every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body." An ear may not be very pretty to look at, sticking out there on the side of our head, but if you are like me they have sure saved you from big trouble many times. The ears can hear things the eye cannot see, like a car roaring up behind you, or someone shouting, Look out! But then, the eye can see things the ear cannot hear, like a deep hole in the ground, you are about to step into, or uninsulated electric wire you are about to touch, and so on. Likewise the nose, as ugly as it may happen to be, can bring you enjoyment, warn you of danger, and help you in many ways, so the body would not be complete without it. You have probably heard people say, Look at the big crooked nose on So and So! Well regardless of how ugly it may be, it has an important function in the

complete makeup of the body. You seldom, if ever, hear anyone say, Look at that beautiful nose, or Look at those beautiful ears, yet they are as much a part of the body as the eyes, that some people are always raving about. In other words, Paul is saying, Do not try to be something you are not made to be. But rather, recognize what you really are, and take advantage of every potential. Do not be envious of some brother or sister, that is able to stand and give a beautiful testimony, nor of those who are blessed with a beautiful voice to sing. Just be ready to say Amen to truth, and thank God for giving you the privilege of hearing it. Be loyal with whatever you have, a smile, a friendly handshake, a visit to some sick person, or just to should Hallelujah; when the Spirit of God blesses your soul. All of this is important, if the body of Christ is to function as a complete, healthy unit. Some people get the idea, that in order to serve God, they have to preach to everyone they meet, when the truth is, they have not been called of God to preach. They would be of more service to God, if they would just consecrate their efforts to living a dedicated life that truly portrays what God has done for them. Some times others are more impressed with what you are, than with what you say. The mere fact that you are speaking truth, does not necessarily mean that God is pleased for you to be doing it. He will anoint you for whatever He wants you to say along that line. The most important thing is

for every Christian to recognize themselves as children of God, and refrain from comparing themselves with their brothers and sisters of the faith. When you look at someone else as being more spiritual than you, what are you actually looking at? Is it the way they talk, the way they dress, the way they pray, or what? If you are doing the very best you can do with whatever ability you have: are you sure that some other certain brother or sister is more spiritual than you? Do you see everything as God sees it? If we were all just exactly alike, where would be God's variety? Furthermore how could we ever recognize the grace of God? Take for instance, a character that has been out here in sin all of his life, as ornery as he could possibly be, and not able to speak ten words without cursing, and then let the grace of God get hold of him, wash him in the blood of Jesus Christ, clean up his language, and put a praise in his heart. There is no way he could suddenly be exactly like some old saint that has been walking with God for years. He has some growing to do first. But he can be just as clean, just as justified before God. He could have been left wallowing in the pit like a snake, but the grace of God saw fit to make him into a vessel of honor. He may not be able to sing, play an instrument, testify, nor any of the many other things that saints are enabled to do, but he can sure lift his hands and say, Thank you God, for saving my miserable soul. That is all God will require of him at first, but

forty years later, if that is all he can do, we would just have to say, There is a fellow that has spent his whole life looking back, for God does expect us to grow in the stature of our blessed Lord from year to year. Not just to be like some other brother or sister, but to be more like Jesus. He is our example in character, attitude, motive and obedience. Do not pray, Lord let me be like Brother So and So; pray that He will help you to be more like Him.

### **A GREAT EXODUS IS NECESSARY**

We started this message talking about some things God is doing among the Jews, and the nation of Israel to fulfill His word for these last days. But let us realize also, that He is doing some things in the Church, to fulfill His word for these last days. Just as the scattered tribes of Israel must be restored to the land of their fathers, to fulfill the word of God, so must the scattered body of Christ be restored to the faith of their fathers, for Jesus is not coming to take a few Catholics, a few Baptists, a few Lutherans, and so forth. He is coming for a body of people that has been called out of those denominations, to follow the revealed word of God for this hour of time. The early church walked in all the truth of their hour; but the Church of our day

knows things that were not even revealed to the Church in the days of the first apostles. What we know from the book of Revelation, was not even given to John until 96 A.D., therefore as great as the apostle Paul was, there are simply little saints around the world today, that know spiritual truth he did not know. That does not detract from the apostle Paul in the least, for he knew everything he was supposed to know in his day, and he was faithful to the complete revelation of that day. Neither does it make us more spiritual than he, for a person cannot be more spiritual, than to be true to all that is revealed to them. Jesus was faithful to all that the Father showed Him, and when He ascended to glory, He sent His Spirit to earth to seal a mystical body of people that would carry on His very work among lost mankind. The Son of God Himself did not do anything that the Holy Ghost in us cannot enable us to do, to fulfill the purpose of God. But now, when you start thinking about walking on water, multiplying bread and fish, and raising the dead, just remember this, Jesus said, It is not I that do these works, but the Father that dwelleth in me. He also said, All things are possible to him that believeth. But we do know that the power of God is not a toy to be played with, and none of us can be any more than what the Spirit of God in us, enables us to be. Naturally I am talking about true children of God, for I realize that Satan also enables his children to do many deceptive things in this life.

He appears as an angel of light, and puts on displays that look exactly like something God would do. But the end of it all is evil, and those who are fooled by it, will perish with it. That is why the apostle John said, (1st John 4:1) "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world." If that was true in 90 A.D., when the gospel was still in its original form, what do you suppose we should look for today, after 1900 years of the devil's perversion? The church is to have the mind of Christ, just like Jesus had the mind of the Father. He had a mind of His own, just like all the rest of us, but He absolutely refused to exercise His own mind above that of the Father. Now do you see any way that we, as a church, could exemplify Jesus Christ, and still exercise our own natural thinking about everything? That early Church would not preach theology, and neither would they preach any of their old traditions; they preached only what the Spirit of Christ in them, revealed to them. Every characteristic of Jesus Christ was expressed in that early church, which was made up of sinners saved by the grace of God, just like it still is today. It is Christ in you, that is the hope of glory, and if He is in you, the world ought to be able to see it, without you having to put on some special display to prove it. Most of what we see displayed on television, called the Church, is not the Church at all. That also applies to most of what

you see worldwide today; not only on television, but in the church world as a whole. As I said, the Church is like Israel. She has been scattered to the four winds, and just as it will take a mass exodus to get the twelve tribes of Israel fully represented back in the land of Abraham's covenant, so will it take a mass exodus to bring the church of the living God back together, and back to the true revelation of God's word. We are not called upon to fulfill the total ministry of Jesus Christ as individuals, but as a body of people, all believing the same thing, and all with the same goal, to be led completely by the Holy Ghost. You do not need to fear that you will be a failure in what God has called you to do. Would He call a person to do something, and then not enable that person to fulfill his calling? Just remember this, If you are doing a true work of God, it is not you that is doing it, but Him. Saints, this applies to every one of us, but I am especially trying to say something to encourage the true ministry of this evil hour. We experience many discouraging things as we go along, but remember, it is the purpose of God that must prevail, and it will, not matter what obstacles we encounter. It is not necessarily what you and I want, but what God wants, that counts. There are times when, even though we feel that what we are doing, is what God called us to do, when we see no fruit from our labors, we tend to become discouraged, but that is because in our minds, we set a time in which we feel

that certain things should happen, if they are ever going to, but that is wrong to feel like that, for God is not bound by our time schedule. Most of the time, when things turn out like that, it is because we have been influenced and programmed by the ideas of others, but many times, that is God's way of testing our loyalty to our calling. That is why we should not suddenly jump into anything, without being sure that what we feel has been layed before the Lord, and His perfect will sought in the matter. Once you have done that, and can feel good in your spirit about what you are anticipating, you just have to wait upon the Lord's time to see the results.

### **WE MUST WAIT UPON GOD**

I will never forget when we first started out, down here on State Street, in New Albany, just a little old mission, and for 4 long years, just the same little group of people. Over and over, just the same little group, service after service. Many times I felt, This is no good; we are just not seeing any results, no growth whatsoever. Then about that time, a missionary would come by, and we would feel a little encouragement for awhile. We would usually get in touch with them through the Branham Tabernacle, and they would without fail, bring in that scripture about, Pray the Lord of the

harvest, that He would send forth reapers, or laborers into the vineyard, because the harvest is white already. Usually though, by the time they would get through preaching, I would just simply feel that I was doing far too little, and not really willing to make a sacrifice for the Lord's work. Many times, I was just about ready to sell everything, go somewhere, and try to do something for the Lord, but it just never did go quite that far. However in 1957, I was privileged, by the grace of God, to spend a month in Cuba, before Castro took over. That was in the month of December. Brothers and Sisters: It just took that one month to let me know that I should go back home and shut my mouth, and wait upon God to give the results, while I did what I was supposed to do. We did not just start that little mission because we felt that New Albany needed another church. Most of you have heard me tell, how that as I would ride that old farm tractor, I could hear a voice over and over, It is time to start the church. That is why I started it; I felt that I had heard the voice of God in the matter. Well I came back home, and continued on as before, and after that, I began to see things start to develop that eventually changed the situation. One thing I will have to say though, Everything that has transpired from that time until now, was not my plans; it was the plan of God. By circumstances, we have been moved along to where we are now. God has His own unique way of moving us

from one phase to another, until He gets His will accomplished. Therefore for whatever it may be worth, you may feel at times that you are just not doing anything for God; but I say, Stop letting the devil kick you around. For if God does not open the door wide enough to show you what to do, what good would your efforts be anyhow? Just stop wrestling with yourself, and stand willing to do whatever God shows you to do, and you will not feel so defeated all the time. That goes for every one of you; not just for the ministry. In denominationalism they always harp on how you have to be willing just to step out by faith, and make a sacrifice for God. But for every one person that has found the will of God like that, there have been ten that have not. Are you beginning to see why I said, You have not yet seen the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ in action. You have seen her scattered, and brought through denominational systems, but you have never seen her in action, as she will be seen here in the end of the age. She will not be looking back; she will be looking straight to the leading of the Holy Ghost. I just want to take a moment to remind you of what happens when people desire only the power of God, and have no love for His word. Most of you have probably heard of the Welsh revival, that struck just before the break of the century. My, what an outstanding display of God's convicting power. I do not know of the convicting power of God ever being displayed anywhere else, like it

was in the Welsh Revival. Many denominational people will look back and say, Oh that god would send us another Welsh Revival. Every time God has ever sent a revival with a true moving of His Spirit, it has always brought more truth, or maybe I should say, more light upon the scriptures. But it is when people just want to look back for the power of God, and are not willing to go any further in the word of God, that the movement eventually dies off. The movement itself, literally died with those that were benefitted by it. The younger generations were left only with a religious form. That is man's way of doing things. That is why you have denominational religious systems in the world today. They draw up their articles of faith, write their creeds and put a period to it, and the Bible becomes a closed book, as far as any further revelation is concerned. They do that, trying to keep the devil from getting in, but when you lock the devil out that way, you also lock out the Spirit of God, and no further light is possible. Well, the early Church was not a denomination; therefore when Paul spoke of the body of Christ, he was not talking about Catholics, Baptists, Assemblies of God, nor any of man's brands; he was talking about true believers, that had been washed by the blood of the Lamb, and sealed in the body of Christ by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. No. He was not talking about super individuals that have been made so holy they literally float through the clouds; he is talking

about redeemed souls like you and me, that still have to maintain our natural lives here on earth every day. That is the reason Jesus payed in John 17, Father, I pray not that you would take them out of the world, but that you would keep them from the evil that is in the world. In other words, The Holy Ghost does not make us immune to sin, but He does enable us to overcome Satan and all of his devices, when we have our minds made up to do so. Who does that apply to? Every member that God has set in the body, no matter how small.

**LET GOD'S PURPOSE BE  
ACCOMPLISHED**

Let us read a few verses from the 12th chapter of Romans, and then we will come back to the 12th chapter of 1st Corinthians. Here in Romans 12, Paul is writing to people who know that they have been redeemed, and made a part of the body he is referring to. He is writing to brethren, but that also includes the sisters. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE. And be not conformed to this world: (though you must still live in it) but be ye transformed (How?) By the renewing of your mind, (Why?)

That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. (The permissive will of God was not even considered in those days; they wanted only the perfect will of God for their lives.) For I say, through the grace given unto me, 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. (Now he talks about the body.) 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.” He goes on into the gifts from there, but let us go back to the scriptures we were on, in 1st Corinthians 12:18, I believe that is where we left off, talking about how it would be, if every member of the body of Christ were exactly alike. Then Paul says, “But now HATH GOD SET THE MEMBERS EVERY ONE OF THEM IN THE BODY, AS IT HATH PLEASED HIM.” Well now, if God is the one that has set us in the body according to His own pleasure, who are we complaining against, when we complain? There is no graduation process in the body of Christ, whereby we can graduate from a foot to a hand, and then to a mouth. Wherever God set you in the body, right there is where you are going to stay. That does not limit your growth in any way, but it does limit your calling. If you are a foot, you just need to learn to be faithful in all that a foot is supposed to

do. That is all God requires of you. He did not save any of us because of good looks, nor because of good deeds, nor because you were some outstanding person; He saved us because He loved us, and He did not put qualifications upon those that believe the gospel. All of the qualifications are in Christ Jesus, because of what He suffered at Calvary. A bank robber can be saved just as quick as a chicken thief, or a drunkard. A lot of people think a real bad person would have a more difficult time getting saved, than one who was not quite so bad. Brothers and Sisters: let us thank God for His grace and mercy, for that is the reason for our salvation. None of us were worthy to be saved. If you want God’s blessings, stop wrestling with those ideas of who is more worthy. Romans 3:23-24 says, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being JUSTIFIED FREELY by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (Let us read verses 25 & 26 also.) Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Right there is your only qualification for God’s great salvation; you must believe in Jesus. But that believing must be with your heart, and not just with your head, and God sets you in the body, in the very place He has already ordained for

you to be. Therefore when you begin to feel like you are nothing, just remember that you are a child of God, and that He has set you where you are. That is why Paul said, "And if they were all one member, where were the body?" In other words, If every member were a hand, who would do the preaching? Or if every member were a mouth, who would do all the other things that must be done? Trust God; for when He placed you in the body, He knew exactly what your qualifications were, but the important thing is, He accepted you. Do not let the devil sit on your shoulder, and lie to you. He will rob you, if you allow him to. "But now are they many member, yet but one body." How could such a thing work? That is the beauty of Christ being the head, rather than some earthly man running it. Denominations are run by earthly heads, that have lost sight of what their founding fathers saw in the word of God. But the true Church of the living God has never been a denomination. It has always been a free people; but constantly buffeted by the devil. The beauty of it all is the fact that the Holy Ghost will only allow the devil to go so far. He is never allowed to go beyond the purpose of God. You may think at times, that god could not possibly have a purpose in some of the things the devil is allowed to do, but I assure you: He does have.

## LEARN HOW TO BESTOW GRACE

This many membered body of people called the Church, is to represent Jesus Christ in their generation; therefore they must move with the times, but they cannot cater to all the fads and fashions of the world, and still fulfill their commission. People are caught up in a spirit of pride, especially in how they look and dress. God does not want us to come to church looking like a bum; but there is one thing sure: when you spend all that time before a mirror primping, and then put on some worldly looking apparel, and trot off to the church, you have not presented yourself before God as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to Him. You cannot glorify God, looking like something the devil drags up and down the street every day. As a matter of fact: If that is what you have in your heart, God is not in there. Now Bro. Jackson: That is hard. I know it is; but I feel that every person who claims to be a Christian, needs to check up on their values. What is uppermost in your minds? How far are you willing to go, to be pleasing to God? The fact is, When the word of God says, "Present your body a living sacrifice," that is exactly what it means. You cannot please God and natural minded people, both at the same time, so a true child of God does not have a multiple choice in these matters. Alright now, verse 21,

“And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay; much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.” We have two extremes here, false pride, and an inferiority complex. False pride might cause the more notable members to look upon others as not being very important in the family of God; and an inferiority complex could cause certain individuals to feel that way about themselves; therefore Paul uses these illustrations to help you see that you are something, and you are not justified to condemn yourself, belittle yourself, nor place yourself so low, and think that God does not love you. He wants to mold us, and show Christ in every one of us. You are just as important as anyone else in the body of Christ. Do not even think about what you have been in the past, nor where you have been; for God wants us to look ahead. You may be prone to question how God ever worked in denominationalism, so let me remind you, God was not perfecting the Church in those systems, He was only using them to keep the Church alive, for her journey through time. But perfection is a picture of what He will bring His true children to, here at the end. Because as He separates His people out of those systems, I just have to say, That is when true Christians, according to Daniel 12:3, will shine as the brightness of the firmament. Well anyhow, I like the way Paul used the

members of the natural human body, to illustrate the true body of Christ. The eye is a very outstanding member of the human body. It is the eye that beholds to beauty of God’s creation. It is with the eye that we see where to put our feet. It is also with the eye, that we see where to put our hands. So the eye being such an outstanding member of the body, represents certain individuals in the body of Christ. They are essential and important, but their attitude should never be, that some other member is not important, nor needed. They should never reach a place where they would say, I tell you, God has been so good to me, I don’t see why Bro. So and So does not do what I am doing. I just wish he, or she, (as the case may be) would shake himself. Brothers and Sisters: Don’t talk like that! That is something for God to take care of. We have all come a long way, but we also, all fell short somewhere along the way. Therefore when we realize that we are falling short, and we come face to face with reality, that is the time to shake ourselves, but it will be the convicting Spirit of God, that causes us to realize that. Furthermore Paul even goes so far as to show us the importance of our being able to bestow grace, or honor, ourselves. God has already given His part, but He asks you and me to bestow grace also, to those who, in the natural, seem to be very unimportant, but in His eyes, are very precious. There is where it takes a lot of grace on our part, for us to be able to extend it like that,

with the right motive. It is like massaging your tired aching feet, realizing how important it is to your whole body, to take care of your feet, for they are needful. Did you ever try climbing a mountain on your head and hands? Aren't you glad to be able to do that with your feet? God knew what He was doing, when He gave us feet, and designed them the way they are. They may not be very attractive, just by themselves but that is why you do not put a 300 dollar suit of clothes on the trunk part of your body, and tennis shoes on your feet. If someone came in here dressed like that, you would have to wonder about him. Now I realize there are parts of the world where there would need to be an exception to that, but try to realize that I am just making a point with such an illustration. Where you have the choice, it would be better to buy a cheaper suit, and a better pair of shoes. The point is, Everything should be looked at in the proper proportions, with the right spiritual insight, recognizing each member of the body, as a soul that God has accepted, and made a joint heir with you in every spiritual blessing, so notice verse 23. (May God help us see the depth of what is written here.) "And those members of the body, WHICH WE THINK to be less honorable, UPON THESE we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness." These that we feel this way about, might be individuals that are not prone to be quick, learning

truths, and such like. Many times, people will say, Bro. Jackson: I believe everything you teach, but I have such a hard time understanding it all. Does that mean I am not spiritual? Not at all. Just be thankful you have something in you that can say Amen, to truth, whether you understand it all or not. Understanding all of the details of everything that is taught, is not what determines whether you are a child of God or not, nor whether you are spiritual. The main thing is that you are able to take what you do understand, and allow the spirit of God to apply it to your life. God never meant for every individual member of the body of Christ to be able to explain every detail of everything they know is truth. Some people say, Oh I would just give anything to be able to catch things like others do. Saints: Do not fight it like that; you will only defeat yourself, if you do. Just yield yourself to God and allow Him to work in your life. He knows exactly what you need. Some people set certain goals, that actually rob them in the long run; like reading the Bible all the way through in one year. We received a letter from a dear soul that has leukemia, desiring that we pray for her, for she had taken so much medicine, it had made her sick, trying to ease her pain. But she also said, Bro. Jackson: Would you please write and tell me, how I can read the Bible through in one year. I wrote back and said, Sister: There are 66 books in the Bible, and only 52 weeks in the years. Therefore I feel that if you try to

program your mind to read one book and part of another, each week, you are going to read so many words, you will probably not catch the thought at all. It is better to read three verses and meditate upon them, than to read a whole chapter, and just have a lot of words pass through your mind.

**WHEN ONE MEMBER SUFFERS,**  
**ALL FEEL IT**

I knew a man years ago that lived a pretty rough life, and when the Spirit of God got hold of him, he somehow felt that it was absolutely necessary to read so many chapter os the Bible each and every night, and he would fall asleep trying to do it. Therefore he was always saying, Bro. Jackson: Pray for me that I can stay awake; I just feel that I have to read so many chapter of the Bible every night. The last I heard from that man, he was in a mental institution. Do not let the devil drive you like that. A lot of people who do not have the learning ability to grasp things like others do, try to make up for it by doing various things like this; but God never meant for you to be like that. Sometimes people even get to feeling like God is a respecter of persons, because they are not able to learn like So and So, but that is not right. God gives you enough grace to carry you through. What He requires,

is that you understand enough to make you live a clean dedicated life, and then He will supply grace for the rest. Upon these we bestow more abundant honor. The fact that it sometimes seems like certain ones are just tagging along, does not mean that they are dabbling in sin, hanging out with the world. Those kind of people, if they are children of God, are just as determined to walk with Him as you are. A less honorable person is not someone you have to constantly be kicking, to get them to go to the house of God. It just simply means that they do not have the ability to grow like others do, in a spiritual way. So when it says, Upon these WE bestow more abundant honor, it means, give them enough attention to keep them encouraged. Do not ignore them, as though they are nothing. (We will see this even clearer, as we get on over into th gifts of the Spirit a little later.) Comely and uncomely are words that mean attractive and less attractive, so just give what Paul says, a spiritual application, and you will see that it points to individual members of the body of Christ. A strong Christian does not need to be pampered, but on the other hand there are always some who require a little extra attention to keep them encouraged. For the devil is always telling them, You know you do not fit in. Therefore they just have a tendency to exclude themselves, and that causes the stronger ones to need to bestow more grace upon them, or more attention. A strong Christian will

always have a deep appreciation for the way God reaches down to bestow grace where it is needed most, so verse 25 says, "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another." That means, Do not show partiality; do not become divided, or look down upon anyone, no matter what the spiritual level may be. A divided people can never get anything done. "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." In the natural body, you can mash your finger, and I tell you, it just sets the whole body on edge, or you can be following someone through the woods, and get slapped in the face with a tree limb, and the whole body will suffer likewise. So that is the way a healthy Church should be. When you see someone suffering a hard trial of some sort, you feel it. Your spirit feels the pain of that suffering member. Likewise when the Spirit of God does something outstanding for a member of the body of Christ, that causes that person to receive extra attention, all the others should be glad, and rejoice with the honored member. But many times, this is where carnal people get jealous, and envious. Maybe God will move upon some young person to give a message in tongues, and the first thing you know, a bunch of old cranks will rise up and say, Who does he think he is? I will never forget when we first started going to the Branham

Tabernacle years ago, and Bro. Branham was talking about speaking in tongues and he looked straight toward me and said, It is good for the Methodists too. I said to myself, if it is good for the Methodists, I want it. That is why for months after that you could find me down in the old cow stable praying. You could find me riding an old farm tractor, plowing corn, praying. Lord I want everything you have for me. Well when I finally did receive what I was praying for, I had an experience with some of those old cranks. One Sunday morning I did speak in tongues in the church, and all of a sudden a bunch of old heads rose up and began to pour on their cold waters of accusations and unbelief, and I just thought to myself, You sit right here in this congregation and you are as dead as you can be. If they had been what they professed to be, they would have rejoiced to see the Spirit of God move upon someone. At a time like that, a person can become very discouraged, but I said within me, I will not judge this whole congregation by your actions, for I came here to hear this man of God and that is what I am going to do. Now that brings me to say this, If you see someone in here, that you do not think acts very much like a Christian, do not judge the whole body of people by what you see out of that one. If you do, you yourself are going to miss God. I do not come here to judge any of you; if for some reason you are falling short, that is something for God to take care of, and He will in

His time. He may let you drag on in your condition for a while, just to be an aggravation to someone. He wants to cultivate some patience in. A lot of people live on the corner of Narrow and Short. They are short on patience, and narrow minded, because they already have everything all planned how it should be, and anything else to them, is wrong. Well these attitudes are not in harmony with what Paul said the body of Christ was to be like, are they? Of course we all realize that the church is not perfected yet, but every one of us should look at these scriptures, and allow the Spirit of God to work on us in whatever area we are falling short. Furthermore if any of you are here, looking for a perfect Church, you will never find it, for perfection is not a sudden thing, it is something that takes place a little at a time, and when the Church finally reaches its hour of perfection, it will be ready to leave here. Therefore let us yield ourselves to the Spirit of God, so that He can mold us as He sees fit to do so.

### **THE CHURCH WAS BORN IN PERSECUTION**

Now as we go past verse 27 we are entering into verses that deal with the gifted ministry in the body of Christ, and then we will want to go back to the verses that deal with the gifts, so may

the Lord help us, as we look at these scriptures together, to see exactly how the true body of Christ is to function and how we are to exemplify the invisible Jesus with our very own lives. When we read the book of Acts, we realize that we are reading a history of the Church, for approximately the first thirty years of its existence. You cannot read the book of Acts without being amazed at how the people could survive all that came against the church in that hour. Christians were martyred, put in jail, fed to the lions, persecuted in every way imaginable, yet believers were added to it daily. God supernaturally spared each Christian's life, until it was that person's time to go, and then He would give them up to martyrdom. There was no let up, hardly a breathing spell in all of it, yet the church grew and set an example of unity and oneness of purpose, that one cannot help but notice. The Spirit of God would baptize people right out of raw paganism, into the body of Christ, and they would take their place in the body for whatever their lot held for them. In a very short interval of time, many of them were greatly used of the Spirit of God, for the edifying of the total body. They truly had a ministry that was projected forth by the living God, and no one had to stand around for years wanting to do something for God, and there was nothing for them to do. There was plenty for every God-called man to do, because no one had a program they were trying to follow. So

now we are almost two thousand years this side of the book of Acts, but we are looking at scriptures that were written in that day, telling us how Christians should conduct themselves, what the ministries are, and also what the gifts of the Spirit are, and their proper use. Sinners believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, not because they can see His literal person, but because they see Him exemplified in His people. The Church is none other than the mystical revelation of the invisible Christ Jesus. The world has never seen Jesus, yet He said the believer would see Him; they would see Him in His Church, which is His body, as He works among them in the office of the Holy Ghost. Therefore as we go into verse 28, we are leaving the part that speaks of individuals in the body, and going into leadership within the ranks of that body. Paul, at this time though, is not going into specific details about all of the calling, or even the gifts. He is just merely grouping certain things together, to give us a broad overall picture, so let us read now, and may God help us in the breakdown of these verses. "And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers." At this time, Paul does not even mention the other two, of the five fold ministry, like he does in Ephesians 4; he is only giving a general introduction. In Ephesians 4:11 we find him saying, "And He (Christ) gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and

teachers; (what for?) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." There you have the ministry in its full recognition. When you read the book of Acts, it is this ministry that you are reading about. They went forth with the great revelation of who Jesus Christ truly was, and what His work at Calvary had accomplished for lost mankind. The apostles were the ones that were authorized to hold a line on what was taught, and to present the full revelation, but many of the others went forth preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. It was the apostles also, that decided how certain issues were to be dealt with, and even the denominational church world knows that; therefore when they hear the mention of apostles in our day, they go straight up in the air, for they already have their committees chosen, to make the decisions for them. That is why they say, Well who do they think they are, talking like that?

### **THE EARLY CHURCH** **BELIEVED ALIKE**

Brothers and Sisters: It is my desire to present this message strictly from the scriptures, regardless of what the denominations have to say about it. With all of their theological training and all of their studying, you cannot

get them to even admit nor accept the fact that there ever was a Gentile prophet. They will acknowledge that there were apostles and prophets in the early church, but they think that was just to get the church started; they see no scripture, nor any need for such a ministry in the church today. It is because of this blindness that they do not even have a revelation of the true picture of the body of Christ. They will work their heads off to get a degree and also to get converts to their system, but they do not know the first thing about the true body of Christ, nor how the Lord adds to that body Himself, such as should be saved. He never did authorize any of His true ministry to arm wrestle anyone into joining up with a system of religion, but they believe that is how it should be done. Well you can rest assured, God will never make that first move to ever perfect a denomination. Of course the reason perfection is such a vital part of end time Christianity is because we are dealing with a different generation of people. The people in the first century of Christianity had been lifted up out of Judaism, and paganism, and given a true revelation of Jesus Christ and what He had accomplished for them; therefore it did not take them years to learn how to be spiritual. They were converted, filled with the Holy Ghost, and by the guidance of the Holy Ghost, they were taught by those ministries, and the first thing you knew, they were on fire for God, and led into their own particular ministry. The goal of the

early church was survival, but today the goal is for perfection, and in both cases it had to be the Holy Spirit leading. I pray to God that somehow He will get hold of our young people, and get them on fire for Him, for the world in general knows very little about God. But that does not change the promise of God; for He will still have a perfected Church in the end. Have you ever stopped to think about the fact that the early Church had no tape recorders, no televisions, no radios, and no newspapers, and yet they did a better job of relating what they had heard then, than you can find in our day. Just think of all the men that sat under the ministry of Bro. Branham, and then think of all the different revelations they think they received from listening to him. When you read the four gospels, you do not find a conflicting story being reported, even though they did not all record every detail of what they were writing about. When you study the writings of those four men, you find harmony in what they wrote. Those eleven apostles that walked personally with Jesus, all caught the same revelation from what they saw and heard, but you will not find it that way today. That brings me to say something that some of you may not like to hear, but it is the truth anyhow. Those tongue speaking Pentecostal preachers that came out of their denominational churches and sat under the teaching of Bro. Branham, and then went every which way causing nothing but confusion, when

the man was taken from us, did not have the Holy Ghost, no matter how much they talked in tongues and prophesied among us. The Holy Ghost does not give two dozen different revelations of the same thing; He is not a spirit of confusion. He is not guilty of causing what we see out here in the ranks of this following today. The sooner we accept the fact that those men did not have the Holy Ghost, the sooner we will realize that they can not be a great authority, speaking the very word of God. Naturally I am talking about the ones that promote these deity ideas about Bro. Branham, and those who closed the door of grace to Gentiles, when Bro. Branham left the scene and all such as that. They have been teaching that there would be no more revelation given to the church after Bro. Branham's death, and yet the Holy Ghost has given much revelation in the last twenty years, and it can be proved by the Bible, for the Holy Ghost does not go contrary to that blessed old time tested book. So we have two extremes out here today, all claiming to be the voice of God, and the truth is, none of them are. How can denominations accept Ephesians 4, if they refuse to accept Malachi 4? Then on the other hand, how can these Branhamites accept Malachi 4, and turn right around and make that Elijah, God? Someone has their wires crossed up somewhere. God has permitted all of this confusion for some purposes though. One thing, it is a test for those who are true believers and have

various ones pulling on them. As for foolish virgins, they will sit in those denominations until it is too late, just like the Jews that remain in the nations, when the call is out to come home. Both will be caught in the great slaughter of the Antichrist, when that great tribulation hour comes. What a bloodbath, yet how can they avoid it?

### **FIVE FOLD MINISTRY IN OPERATION**

God is on the verge of raising up a ministry that will really pull the Church together, and not a one of them will learn their revelation from a Bible school or seminary. The early Church had no such places; those young preachers sat under an anointed ministry in places such as this one right here. No diplomas were given out, and no one was referred to as Dr. So and So. Timothy, Titus, and young men like them just simply learned from the older saints, until such time as the Spirit of God projected them forth. One thing is sure though, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, is the only ministry that the Lord Jesus Christ in His high priestly work, set in the church, and when you study the lives of those men, you will see that they were all simple men, very ordinary, but with a genuine revelation in their bosom. Now not every one of

these men had the same ability though. An evangelist did not need to know everything the apostles knew, in order to be effective as an evangelist. A general knowledge of the revelation set that evangelistic spirit in him on fire, and he did not necessarily deal in all the depths of the full teaching, as the apostles did. It is all a matter of being led by the Spirit of God, and being right on time. Not six months too early, nor a year too late, but right on schedule. God uses different vessels to accomplish different things. An evangelist might come along and say the same thing your pastor has said many times, and it would just click with someone. The difference is in the way it is presented. Many times the evangelist just has a certain way of presenting things, that gets people's attention. That is the way it is supposed to be though; that eliminates the one man show. Every man's ministry is centered around the Lord Jesus Christ as it should be. Did not Paul refer to Jesus as the apostle and high priest of our profession? Why did he say that? Because Jesus was a man sent forth with a message. Everything He said, was the perfect word and expressed thought of the mind of the eternal God. Jesus was not some religious character running the road trying to make a name for Himself. He had one objective, to express the mind of God to those who heard Him. Yes He definitely was a man with a message. That is why, when He came to the end of His ministry, He could say, I have finished

the works (the miracles) that thou gavest me to do, I have delivered unto them, thy word, and I have revealed unto them thy name. That was the three primary things He was sent to do, when the Father incarnated Him at age 30 years. Therefore when the Holy Ghost came to indwell believers, He came with every bit of that same potential that Jesus in person possessed, and was able to do the same works through those believers that Jesus had done. The big difference is, He is doing the same thing through many men, that He had been doing through only one. They preached the full word of God for their hour; they revealed the true God to those who were ordained to receive that revelation, and they did many miracles, all by the same Spirit that was in Jesus. But not a one of them ever had to carry around a big sign saying, I am an apostle: everyone open the doors for me. It was more likely to be just the opposite of that. They were more likely to end up in jail, with stripes on their backs and left to die, until the Holy Ghost would intervene. Then they would just wash their wounds a little bit and go right back to preaching again. They also had a message to deliver and a revelation to project forth.

### **WHAT AN APOSTLE DOES**

Now I have read books of Trinitarian denominational men that had great faith, and I am sure many of you have too, but they did not have the proper revelation to preach and teach. I read one book about a man of great faith that was sent to India years ago, and referred to as the apostle to India. Of course no one could deny that the man had great faith, for it told of the times he had prayed for God to supply the things he had need of, and how many times it was by a miraculous means that his needs were met. So we would have to say, God supplied the material means for what the man went there to do, and it seemed like whenever he preached, the convicting power of God was present to put people under conviction, but the one thing I noticed was that there was no depth of revelation of the word of God preached, and he could not preach on the Godhead, for he was a Trinitarian. Yet he was called an apostle. In other words, when you read the book you could easily say, That man had as much faith as the apostle Paul or Peter, or any of them, but his revelation of the word of God was very shallow. Why? Because of the hour he lived in. God was not, at that time, dealing with the Church from the standpoint of it's primary scriptural position. He was dealing with it as it went through it's cycle, bringing it to the place where it stands today. None of the Reformers even had very much revelation of the overall doctrine of Christ, but they every one served in their hour, to bring

the Church one step further from the Dark Age period she had gone through. Therefore God would require no more from any of them, than what he had committed to them. So it is one thing to be an apostle in the sense that this man was, but scripturally, an apostle is one who holds a line on the revelation of the word of God. People give the definition of an apostle as ONE SENT, and from their standpoint, many men qualify to be called apostles, but if you want a true definition, you must go back to what the first apostles were, and what they were sent out with. They did not carry the message of some denomination when they went forth; they carried the true message of Jesus Christ; who He was, what He was, and what He had done for lost mankind. So the apostle Paul, as he writes here, is giving a general picture of what kind of ministry Jesus set in the Church, to carry on the work of redemption. Apostles were first, but then he gives prophets second place in authority, and he is not talking about Old Testament prophets like God raised up in centuries past, to deal with Israel in the law age. God used those Old Testament prophets to rebuke, to correct, to exhort, and also to prophesy of future events to take place. Some of them spake prophecies of things that were hundreds of years away. It was those prophets, who prophesied of the first coming of Jesus Christ. It was those prophets also, that first spake of the second advent of Christ and even of the Millennium, though the word

Millennium is not found in the Bible. However those old prophets did look down through their great binoculars of God, and see a kingdom age coming into existence, and the knowledge of the Lord covering the earth. But like I say, These are not the prophets Paul was referring to here in this Corinthian letter. He is talking about prophets who have committed to them a portion of the prophetic ministry like Jesus had. You read in Luke, of the time Jesus came over the hill, looked at Jerusalem and wept, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, (This is a prophecy,) that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Some might have thought He was just talking, but in a very simple way, He was prophesying of something that was to come upon that city, and it would not be too far off. It hit in a generation from the time it was given, so we can look back and see that it was a perfect prophecy. It lay right there and later, when the disciples pointed to the temple and remarked of it's beauty, Jesus said to them, "The days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown

down." Then they asked Him, "When shall these things be?" He told them of quite a few things that they should watch for, and then He said, (Luke 21:20) "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto." All of those things were prophecies, dealing with present tense conditions that were related to the body of disciples. But in Matthew 24, in the same setting, you find a more detailed account of all that Jesus said to those disciples, and it covers not only present tense conditions, but also reaches all the way to the end of time. But even though Jesus did speak far reaching prophecies, when that prophetic Spirit was dropped into the church, it was more for prophecies concerning present tense conditions. In the first Church, there were three men that stood out, with those prophetic ministries, Agabus, Silas, and Judas. It was Agabus that went to Antioch one time and stood up, signifying by the Spirit that there was going to be a great drought throughout all the land, and the scriptures say that this was accomplished in the days when Claudius was the Roman emperor, which according to history, was of a short duration after that. That is when the Christians in other outlying areas began to take up offerings to send to

Jerusalem, for it was obvious that they were the hardest hit and they suffered much.

### **PAUL GOES TO JERUSALEM**

In later years, when Paul was on his way to Jerusalem determined to visit the saints there, Agabus came into a little prayer meeting where Paul was present in Caesarea, and walked over and picked up Paul's coat, or belt, and proceeded to bind his own hands and feet with it, saying, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." Then all the disciples there, started crying and begging Paul not to go up to Jerusalem, but Paul was determined to go and said to them, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Then all of them saw how determined he was, ceased crying and begging, saying only, "The will of the Lord be done." Actually if you study this thing out, you will discover that Paul's going to Jerusalem was not by the leading of the Lord at all; it was just something that Paul wanted to do. God is not going to lead you to do something, and then turn right around and use prophets to warn you not to do it. When God starts warning you, that there is trouble ahead, He is usually doing it for one

purpose, to change your mind, and turn you around. It was while Paul was at Corinth, after having that great revival at Ephesus, that he wrote the epistle to the Romans, and it was in that letter to the Romans that he wrote of this great revelation given to him of how the Jews were blinded in part, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. No doubt, as he experienced this great moving of the Spirit of God among the Gentiles, he had been hearing also that things were letting up in Jerusalem, cooling off. But him being a Jew himself, and still having a great burden for them and desiring to see those old patriarchs of the faith, Peter, James, and those others, it just put a burning desire in him to want to go to Jerusalem at least one more time. Well, even though he was a great man of God, and responsible for the larger percentage of the New Testament epistles, he was not always led by the Lord on everything he did. After he spent three years in the Arabian desert, following his conversion, he went up to Jerusalem, and wanted to stay there and give his testimony, but he was warned by the Spirit of God; they will not receive your testimony here, you must leave. Then to stress my point a little further, when he wrote to the Romans, he said, "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you." Then he went ahead to say, "But now I must go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints." He was taking an offering up for the poor saints at Jerusalem, but all along the

way he was warned not to go. Now of course he desired to go to Spain because he knew there was a large element of Jews there. In old Toledo, the ancient capitol of Spain, right today, they will take you on a tour to the old Jewish quarter. The old synagogue, which is several centuries old, is still there. It is a historical monument. But in that old city of Toledo, there were many Jews, and Paul always sought out the Jews, wherever he went, because he said, The gospel is to the Jew first. So at Corinth, when he wrote this Roman letter, he fully planned to go to Spain after he made his trip to Jerusalem. Well the point is, he never did get to Spain. He got to Rome, but not the way he had planned. He went as a prisoner. That is what you have to look at as you study these scriptures. He was bound and determined to go up to Jerusalem, and all along the way, he was warned not to go. It seemed like in every little assembly, the Holy Ghost would speak through someone warning him not to go, that trouble was ahead for him. So I believe Agabus was the last one that was used to warn him, which gets us back to what we were on; Agabus was truly a New Testament prophet. Yes they have a ministry in preaching the word of God, but it is the way the Spirit uses them, that makes them what they are, and this type of prophet is not used to speak of those far reaching things of the future. Theirs is in relation mostly, to things of their generation, things that affect either the church, or individuals.

Silas and Judas, being prophets, were chosen by the Church at Jerusalem, to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch, after they had come to the elders at Jerusalem, concerning the question that had arisen at Antioch concerning circumcision. There is not much written concerning them, but there is enough to allow you to see that they were used of the Holy Ghost to bear witness of the apostles decision on that matter.

### **TEACHERS AND EVANGELISTS**

Now the third ministry that Paul mentions in his Corinthian letter, is teachers, so let us ask the question, What is a teacher, in this five fold ministry? He is definitely a man with the Holy Ghost ability to take a subject from the scriptures, and explain it in such simple terms, that it is easy to understand and also edifying. People are able to grasp the truth of what he explains. That is completely different from the work of an evangelist. A teacher will most likely take one subject, and go into every little detail of it, where the evangelist will more or less just take the general overall thought of the subject, and deal with it along the line of soul salvation, and such like, to the point where conviction comes upon people. So let us just say that this type of teacher is a man, called of God, to teach and explain the

scriptures of depth. You will notice also, that even though Ephesians 4 lists all five offices, and mentions teachers last, in this Corinthian letter, the teacher is rated thirdly, after apostles and prophets. But we do know for sure that it takes all five of these offices to make up the total ministry that God expressed in the man called Jesus, the Christ. A pastor is a preacher, but he has to be more than just a preacher. He has to be a man that is content to stay in one place for a period of time. He must also be able to lead a congregation of people and minister to their needs. He must be able to give spiritual counseling as well as good common sense answers to other questions, and a man that can gain the confidence of his people. A man with a roving spirit always with the heebie jeebies and can't be stills, could never be a pastor to fulfill this office. Now I was asked the question in Mexico, Bro. Jackson: Can a man be an apostle, and yet be a pastor? I said, Yes. Remember in the book of Acts, that is how the various churches got started. The apostles of that hour would go out, and more or less evangelize, until they got a group of people converted to the faith, and then they would stay and pastor them, until they were established enough to be left, usually after they had ordained elders among them. Paul stayed in Ephesus for over three years, preaching, teaching, and pastoring the flock. Then he ordained elders, or appointed elders, before he left them, and we know that because

when he returned, he called for the elders to meet him. But Saints: Please do not allow yourselves to become too technical about these things, God can handle every situation, without you being so technical about every little detail. Let us just be simple with it, if we really desire the favor of God. But as I have said all of this, my real point is, We have not yet seen the body of Christ in action. We have only seen the Spirit of God, and what a wonderful privilege it has been, but we have not seen it all yet. Through the years, in many areas of the world, there have been outstanding moves of the Spirit of God and people were benefitted by it in their hour. It affected lives, changed lives completely, yet the overall affect of it has not remained alive, to be a lasting, living thing in others, from generation to generation. They managed to hold on to the revelation, but not the type of ministry that brought it, nor the way the Spirit of God worked it. Now God does not necessarily want to repeat Himself, because He has always got something new, that He can do for people who seek after Him, but my point is, The life of every great move has died out, usually with the next generation. But I believe with all my heart that world conditions are going to necessitate the Spirit of God to work in our lives for our spiritual growth, and our ability to overcome and keep the victory, as we move toward the soon coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. I also sincerely believe that it is this type of ministry,

that is definitely ordained to lift the bride up to a spiritual plateau wherein every individual will be perfected. Then God will see the whole body perfected, walking as a unique group of people, while the world rocks on in their evil ways. That which the world looks upon as a cult, will one day be the perfected bride of Jesus Christ.

### **A MINISTRY IN UNITY**

Denominations will never accept the teaching of Bro. Branham, nor even acknowledge that he was any more than any other preacher. But what that man brought, has sowed seed in some hearts, and it is going to lay right there as a record of God's truth, until He raises up some men that will take that truth and go forth with it. This end time ministry will not ignore what God anointed that little man to bring to this age. They will pick up the revelation, even if God had to deal with some of them, like He did Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. But, Brethren: Won't it be wonderful to see some from India, some from Africa, some from Scandinavia, and other parts of the world, never having known each other, but all having the same revelation and understanding of the word of God? No, they will not learn it from the seminary, nor a Bible school, but they will see it written someplace, and when the time comes, the Spirit of

God will quicken it to them. That is when God will truly put a people together, because by that time, world conditions will necessitate it. That is why we need to be making up our minds, as to whether we are going to live for God or not. Let me say this though, We cannot hurry the plan of God, nor neither can we hinder it. For just about the time you get your plans laid, and think you can change something, He will just simply take you out of the way. His plan must go on, and on schedule. Brothers and Sisters: I am so thankful that God is faithful to perform all of His word. Just think about all of these great evangelists like Billy Graham, Jimmy Swaggart, and so many, that have such little true revelation of God's word, and yet they have great multitudes following them. Billy Graham's teaching on the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, is as far from right, as daylight is from dark, yet there are thousands that believe every word he utters. They will sit right there in their denominations looking at that, while the bride moves on to glory. I am fully persuaded though, that before she goes, the man of the world is going to look at her and say, There is a group of people that God is truly with. I believe world conditions will bring it about.

## PAUL WRITES TO THE ROMANS

Alright then, Paul speaks only of three of the five fold ministry, apostles, prophets, and teachers, and then he goes right to the gifts saying, "After that, miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." He spoke of a whole category of gifts in just a few words, so let us take that to the 12th chapter of Romans, and compare it with what he wrote there. There is now ay under the sun that a man, or a system of men, can take this Bible, and this subject, and put a Church together, and make it function properly, if they do not have an overall revelation of God's complete restored word. The Spirit of God will not work apart from the truth of His word. He will not work, to back up a trinity teaching. Nor will He work to confirm the word of someone who wants to fight against predestination, or eternal security, nor anything like that. The Spirit of God is putting together a body of people who are each one willing to accept the fullness of His revealed word, and that body of people will not be a denomination. So in Romans 12:3, Paul says, "For I say, through the grace given into me, (his revelation) to every man that is among you, (This is to the Romans, and he has never been there.) Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think." In other words, No matter how

spiritual we may be, we are only what we are, because of the grace and mercy of God. It is when people begin to feel exalted and important, that they mar the beauty of Jesus. People then see the flesh of that person, but they do not see the invisible Christ, the one that ought to be seen. It is the people who are willing to make of themselves nothing, that Jesus Christ can really be seen in. Jesus Himself set the perfect example, by making no reputation of His own, that the eternal God might be seen in Him, by all of whom He was revealed to, so let us finish that verse now. "But to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." It is that measure of faith that brings us into the plan of salvation. So no matter how weak we may feel, or how insignificant, let us not allow the devil to defeat us. The battle may be hard, the trials of life may be severe at times, but these are not for our destruction, they are testings whereby the Lord allows our faith to be tried. No He is not trying to take it away from us, He just wants us to realize like Job did, that, though God slay me, yet will I trust Him. Many times it seems like you almost have to look death in the face, before you will make a confession and commitment like that, and see the hand of God work on your behalf. As the song goes, just hold to God's unchanging hand, and before you know it, the glorious rays of sunshine and deliverance will break through, and you can stand and glorify God saying, It is worth it all, praise

God! Do not ever allow yourself to say, I just do not have any faith, sufficient for us to overcome our common enemy, the devil. God never cuts us short of what we need, we just simply have to learn how to use the faith we have. Faith is something that grows with exercise, the more you use what you have, to take hold of a promise of God, the more you will have. Alright now, verse 4, "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," We all belong to each other. No. He is not talking about a bunch of Baptists and Methodists and Presbyterians getting together for an ecumenical meeting, he is talking about true children of God, that are not called by any of those brand names, all being of the same body, and members in particular. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith." You cannot help but notice that Paul is just speaking in general terms. He is not getting specific about anything. "Prophecy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching." Now that is good advice. It was hard for me to realize years ago, that God usually requires us to wait upon our ministry. When God first begins to spark something inside of you, and you feel that you have been called to preach,

you are just like a young colt, you are ready to run at everything, and sometimes God really wants you to just wait. For nine long years, I rode that old farm tractor, with big tears streaming down my face, crying, Oh God, the world is going to hell. I could just see a lot of people going to hell, and I thought I had a burden to give my life to the world in an evangelistic type of ministry, and God just had to let me flounder around through a lot of things, before I ever got so I could recognize His true leading. What that is, most of the time, is our flesh being worked on, our nature being tested; so if we can just learn to sit still and be patient, we prove our learning capabilities in that way, and we learn to recognize God's true leading. God is not looking for a high flying, hyperactive type of preacher, that is always running, and tries a dozen different things, and misses most of them, most of the time. No. God does not want that, He wants us to wait until He leads us into our particular calling. In other words, Whatever God has called you to do, or be, the time will come when that opportunity will be there. But people will say, Well Bro. Jackson: I see such a need though. Well God knows all about it, and when everything else is right, He will have you in the right place, and at the right time. Now, "Or he that exhorteth, or exhortation: (wait for the right opportunity) he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity." Most of us are working people, with a certain contributing potential toward

the work of God. But there are areas of the world, where God may raise up a work for His kingdom, that may not have that potential among them; therefore God will also raise up someone with a material means to contribute to the work of that church, but Paul stresses the fact, that giving ought to be done with simplicity. In other words, Do not give, expecting everyone to salute you for it. Give it as unto the Lord, and pray that He will multiply it, and make it a blessing for His kingdom. Then the next thing there is, "He that ruleth, let him be diligent." That has a combined meaning with what Paul said in Corinthians, when he mentioned helps. It is helping in a way that is essential and necessary for the benefit of that local church. In other words, When he says helps and governments, he is referring to men who are called to be deacons. They are an arm of the ministry, to more or less deal with the materialistic function of the church, so the ministry can give themselves more to the word of God, and attend to spiritual matters, without having their minds all bogged down with a lot of the other problems. Therefore these helps and governments are needed in the church.

### **COVET THE BEST GIFTS**

We are back in 1st Corinthians 12 now, to finish these verses, and we are

talking about helps and governments, and then diversities of tongues, and then in verse 29, Paul says, "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?" Sometimes when you turn on the television you might think so, if you did not know the truth. It seems like every preacher like that, wants to portray himself as some great man of God any more. Over in the book of Revelation, we read where the church at Ephesus tried those men, who claimed to be apostles, and found them to be liars. It seems like every year since Bro. Branham's death, this sort of thing has just ran rampant. Ever so many men have raised up, claiming to be God's last day prophet. Why would they do that? It is a working of Satan, designed to detract from the one who truly was God's last day prophet, and the church world in general did not recognize it. The devil sends them out two or three at a time, just crisscrossing the road of life, sowing their revelation in the church world, and multitudes are following them. Saints: I am thankful that God knows what He is doing. Are all apostles? No. Are all prophets? No. Are all teachers? No. Are all workers of miracles? No. The point is, If they were all the same thing, God's variety would be lost, and that cannot be. If they were all the same thing, and all speaking the same thing, there would not be room for all of them. Do you know what thrills me? When we have a convention here, and one brother will take a passage of

scripture and deal with a subject: then later on, another brother that was not here to hear the first one, will get up, and lay another message right alongside that one, not a repeat, but in perfect harmony with it. That is the beauty of being Holy Ghost led, and not just trying to do something great to edify flesh. The Spirit of God knows the minds of the people, and therefore knows what is needed. "Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?" The obvious answer to all three, is, No. We will go back to the first part of this chapter a little later, and look at the gifts, and talk about their place in the Church, but for now, let us go on here. "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." These gifts are just as much for our day, as they were Paul's day. When we were in denominationalism, we were ignorant of these gifts, and their place in the Church, but Paul says we should covet the best gifts. Now that does not mean that everyone should covet only those gifts that seem to be the most important; it means that we should covet those gifts that seem to be the best gifts for us. God gives us certain leadings and our coveting of these gifts, should be in harmony with the leading of the Spirit in your life. To covet is to desire. So let us study, and pray for those gifts that would be useful in connection with what God has placed in your life already. Of course, when Paul said, Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I

unto you a more excellent way, some people take that to mean that he is discouraging us from seeking those gifts, but that is not the case at all. Covet earnestly the best gifts, is the peak of it all, and a proper translation of the rest of that verse should have been, and I will show unto you the way to do it. For he goes right ahead in chapter 13, exalting love as the proper motive of everything we do. In other words, chapter 13 is really an explanation of this 31st verse, and when Paul finishes explaining how love ought to be the motive for all that we do, in the 13th chapter, then he goes right into chapter 14 saying, Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. That is because prophecy lifts up and edifies the whole church, more than some of the other gifts.

### **GIFT OF SPIRIT - GIFTS OF SPIRIT**

Now when we speak of the gifts, some people get confused between the gift of the Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit, so let me explain the difference. In Acts 2:38, when Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the GIFT (singular) of the Holy Ghost," he was talking about receiving the Holy Ghost

in the new birth experience. That gift, which is the Holy Ghost, is what seals us into the body of Christ. That is your eternal security. But the gifts (plural) of the Spirit, are those nine gifts listed in the first part of chapter 12, in this Corinthian letter. Through these nine gifts, placed in the church, the Holy Spirit is able to minister to the universal body of Christ, the same way Jesus ministered in person, when He walked upon earth in fleshly form. Therefore the gift of the Spirit is eternal life itself, and the gifts of the Spirit are for ministering the various attributes of the living Christ among the body of believers. So when Paul said, Yet show I unto you a more excellent way, he was really saying, Let me show you what the motivation behind all of those gifts ought to be, and that of course, is love. You just have to realize that this has been translated from the Greek language, and many times the translators were not given the best terminology, to explain, or phrase something that would be easily understood hundreds of years later, when so many words have taken on a different meaning in our modern day language. For instance, they used the word charity instead of love, but to us, charity speaks more of giving something to someone, than it does of love, so let us proceed a little further with this 31st verse, and then we will take a look at chapter 13. When Paul said, But covet earnestly, that means, seek for, long for, and desire, and allow yourself to

be led toward. When you are coveting a new car, do you just sit around in the bushes somewhere, and twiddle your fingers? No, you begin to look at new cars, and think about the kind that would best suit your needs. You go to the showrooms and car lots, and check them over, until you begin to form in your mind exactly what you are looking for, and then you proceed to find the one you will acquire, but you do not just sit down, and hope that the right one will come to you. That is not the way to go about it. The word COVET, is an important word; it expresses action on our part. God is not the one that has to covet; we are the ones that must do that. But remember this, if there is something in us, that causes us to covet, there has to be something somewhere, that can fill that desire, so let us pray and seek the will of God in everything we do. Then let me ask you this, How did Paul tell us to covet? Covet EARNESTLY. To covet earnestly, means that we should really get down to serious business with our desires, our yearnings, and not just slouch around waiting for God Himself to force something upon us. You covet earnestly by expressing yourself to God, in your own individual way of expressing yourself. It is God Himself that bestows the gifts, I cannot give them to you. So to covet earnestly, means to desire with a motive, and allow your mind to dwell upon what you desire. You never see a person who is seriously looking for a new car, just sauntering around over

town, looking in department stores; that is not where you find a car. I just say it like that, to make a point. To covet earnestly the best gifts for you, is to get yourself into some sincere frame of thinking, and then it is God that knows your thoughts and motives, and bestows what you desire, according to your ability to handle it. But to be earnest, is to excel aggressively, showing an expression of determination. Seek and long for, with an aggressive, determined attitude. In other words, just for instance, When a person is seriously looking for a new car, that is uppermost in their mind. Every time you get around them, that is what they are talking about. They spend more time looking at cars, than anything else. Therefore let us just transfer that same thought over to what Paul is speaking of here. Naturally we will still have other obligations that require us to give our attention to, but aside from them, our attention is usually given to the desires that are uppermost in our mind, and that is what Paul is dealing with here, so these words, COVET EARNESTLY, must not be taken lightly, for he is definitely putting emphasis upon it. But we are to have the right motive in it all, or all will be in vain. The Church of Christ, (denominational) and many of the fundamental movements today, will take this 13th chapter, and explain away, all that has been mentioned in chapter 12. Therefore those who sit and listen to them, have no desire to seek for anything in the way of

spiritual gifts. That is why their organizations are dead; there is no life of the Spirit of God among them.

### **MOTIVE FOR SEEKING GIFTS**

Another thing to remember, is when we are hungry for God, He guides our thinking. He is the one that leads us to desire the gifts that are best for us, and it is the Spirit of God that divides to every person severally as He wills, so we can see why our desires must be in accordance with the way He has been leading our lives. You will remember that Romans 11:29, says, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Therefore when the gifts are bestowed upon us, God does not then feel that He made a mistake; He knows that He has done the right thing. You could say also, The Spirit of God does not lead your thinking in one direction, and then give you a gift that would take you in another. Sooner or later, He causes your mind to lock in, and dwell upon something that is best for your particular makeup. No mortal man can tell you what you need to seek after, so do not come to me and say, Bro. Jackson: Do you think I should seek to prophesy, or to speak in tongues, or interpret? I do not know. That is between you and your God. One thing is sure though, The business of God is not a haphazard, chancy sort of thing; what he does is sovereignly in

accordance with His perfect will. After you receive a gift though, there is a certain growing process that you must go through, in order to allow the Spirit to lead you in the proper use of that gift. Not everything you see in the ranks of religion is truly of the Lord, and neither is everything that is truly of the Spirit of God properly used, but I will say this, Whatever is of God, will serve a purpose in the overall growth of the body of Christ, even in the immature use of a gift. So let me rephrase verse 31, once again, and use words that are more commonly used in our day. But covet (or desire) earnestly the best gifts for you, and I will show you the proper way to go about it. Then he goes into what we call the 13th chapter, but when Paul wrote the epistle, it was not divided into chapters and verses; it was just a letter, written in much the same way as any of us would write a letter. So the first verse of chapter 13 is just carrying right on with the same subject he is on, only he is starting to use some comparison, that will lead the true believer into the proper frame of mind in seeking spiritual gifts. Now as I read this, I am not going to use the word charity as it is written here, for to us, charity is what we give to the Red Cross, the Goodwill organization, or some such organization that helps the needy, but regardless of where the word can properly be used, we do not use it in place of the word love. Can you just imagine me performing a wedding ceremony, and saying to the

bridegroom, Do you promise to charity her as long as you both shall life? I believe you know what I mean, so we will insert L-O-V-E in place of C-H-A-R-I-T-Y, in these verses we are going to read.

### **EVERYTHING SHOULD BE MOTIVATED BY LOVE**

Verse 1 says this, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love (the love of God) I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” That in no way discredits his original or previous statement, “Covet earnestly the best gifts.” No. He is telling us how to seek these gifts, so that we will not fall into error. These guidelines help the believer to realize that whatever is done in a service, if it is not done to glorify the Lord, and motivated by a Godlike kind of love, it will be just like a little bell ringing, as far as the good it does. People who come to church only to speak a message in tongues, and have no time to fellowship in the rest of the service, are being motivated by the wrong spirit. When we come in here, we ought to be ready to sing together, pray together, testify for the glory of God, and then settle down and feed upon the word of God that is preached. We are a body of people. We are a part of each other. Therefore the

gifts are not just for the edification of the one operating the gift; the whole body should be strengthened through them. Jesus is not among us in a physical body; therefore He does, through the gifts, what He would do if He were present in bodily form; therefore when it is all over, we definitely should have seen Jesus manifested among us, and not just someone's flesh. When I was down in Mexico, I was asked, Bro. Jackson: Do you want to go back into another room, and wait until it is time for you to preach? No, brothers and sisters, I come to church to fellowship; not just to deliver a little sermon and go home. That may be alright for some people, but for my part, I love to fellowship my brothers and sisters throughout the entire service. Of course I could not sing Spanish, but I could clap my hands, and enjoy their singing. Life is too short for me to be left out of that part of the service. As for time to pray and meditate, I always feel that I should do that before I come to Church, that few minutes in a back room is liable not to be enough time to get hold of God, and get what you need. I sometimes recheck my scriptures before service, and come in a little late, but I like to be a part of all that is taking place, when it is possible. But the whole point is, None of us should ever allow ourselves to be just a tinkling cymbal in the service. We should have the love of God in us, and our mind upon Him, and pray, Lord, if you see something in this vessel, you

want to use for your glory, then help me to yield, to that extent. When we have that attitude, we can rest assured, He will use whoever He wants to and He will use them at exactly the right time, so there should be no unnecessary fretting about whether we will recognize His anointing or not. If we truly love each other, with a God-like kind of love, we will have nothing to fret about; we can just yield to the Spirit of God, and allow Him to run the service. That thought takes us right back to the gospel of John, where we are made aware of the fact that Jesus Himself never sought to do anything apart from what the Father showed Him to do. Did you ever really stop to think that if the very Son of God Himself, did not exercise His own mind on spiritual matters, there must have been a reason? His will was to do the will of the Father; therefore I ask you, Should we be any different? Of course not, and that is what Paul is getting to, for when true love is your motivating force, God's will is uppermost in your mind. So he says, in verse 2, "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no love, I am nothing." That is exactly what it would all lead to, as far as any spiritual benefit is concerned, if love was not the true motivation. Notice now, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it

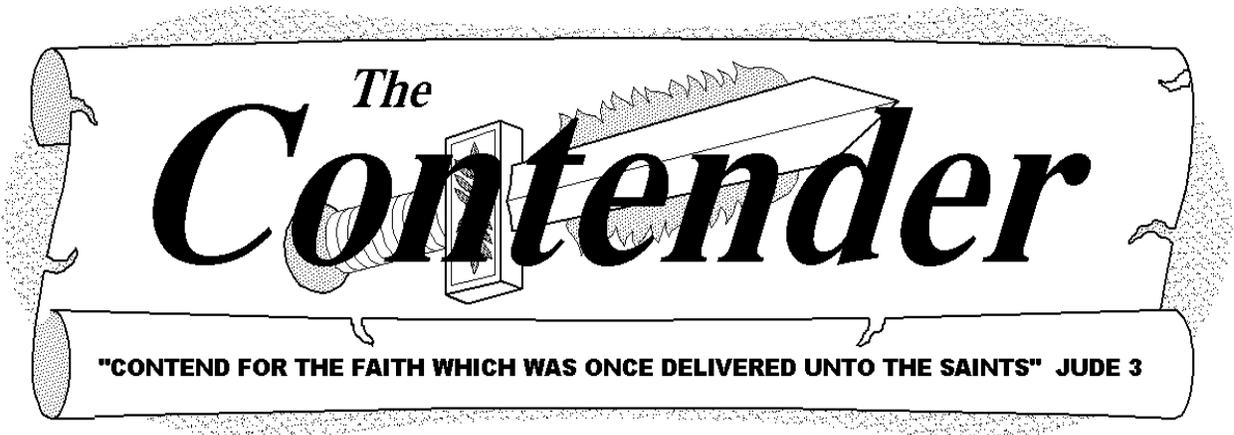
profiteth me nothing.” Does that remind you of anything that has taken place lately? I thought of how so many of these rock stars had gotten together and recorded a song to be sold to raise money, to help relieve that terrible famine in Africa. Every day that famine got worse, and the need is definitely there, but if those people who participated in that endeavor, think it is going to merit them any favor with God, they have another thought coming. Those unbelievers will burn in hell, just like all other unbelievers, no matter how much money is raised through their album, for that cause, because their motive was not a God like kind of love. They did it for attention, more than for a concern born out of true love. Now saints, I am not trying to be foolish; that is exactly what this verse of scripture points to. The world looks at those people as stars, but in the eyes of God, it is a much different story. Regardless of how much money is raised for that cause, those people have not really contributed anything out of their bank accounts. If they were willing to reach down into their bank accounts, and slip something into the treasury for that cause, and go their way, and never let it be known, then God might reward the effort somehow, but these have already received their reward for what they did, in the praise they got for doing it. The individuals that have really sacrificed to help those people are the poor missionaries that have gone into those regions years ago.

When so many of them were still half savage, and have sacrificed to preach the good news of the gospel to them. That has brought a lot of them out of darkness, and into an hour of understanding of how to live. So the point is, What good is any of the things you do, if someone somewhere does not see the love of God exemplified. Paul says it is of no profit; it amounts to nothing. Then he goes ahead to explain how love behaves itself. “Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.” When unjust things are thrown at you, and the pressures about you get so rough you sometimes feel that you could explode, it is the love of God in you that actually stabilizes you, and calms the storm. It is love, not your flesh, It is love, not your mentality, It is love that suffers long. The true love of Christ can see through the circumstances, and cause you to keep your balance. Then the true love of Christ is kind, and it is a pure kindness. Some religious people have harnessed this verse to the point where they have so much love, they can never see anything wrong. They close their eyes to evil, and pretend it is not there. That is not the love of God. The Bible keeps this whole thing balanced. The virtuous side of love suffers long, is kind, and does not envy. Love in its true balance will not allow you to feel left out, because someone else is excelling a little more than you are. To envy, is to want something someone else has, but God’s love in you will not

allow that. Brothers and Sisters: Let us not strive for what someone else has; we should strive to be in the place where we can receive what God has for us. Just to use a carnal illustration, suppose God gave you the largest pearl, and only saw fit to give me a little ruby, or something maybe not even worth half as much, love will cause me to thank God for what He gave me, rather than to envy you because of what you received. God knows what we are capable of handling; and we need to have enough confidence in His judgment to believe that what He does is best for us. You see envy in every walk of life, but it is definitely not of God. "Love vaunteth not itself." That means that true love will never brag, and exalt oneself above measure. Envy causes people to brag and exalt themselves, always trying to outdo someone else, and it will usually cause some silly carnal act, that turns out to be an embarrassment many times. So to vaunt yourself, is to exalt yourself above others, but the love of God, if it is allowed to lead our lives, will not allow us to do that. When you hear someone bragging, it is one of two things, Either it is by the wrong spirit, or out of an immature carnal nature, that has not yet been crucified with Christ. Love will not allow us to be puffed up, and feel that we are better than everyone else. The Bible says, Condescend to men of low estate. As we put ourselves down. That is why you read in the Philippian letter, Let

this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. He knew who He was, but He did not go around bragging about it. He never did put on a show, just to demonstrate who He was. Everything He did, was to glorify the Father that was in Him. He made Himself of no reputation. Every illustration Paul used here was characterized in Jesus Christ. He was love personified, and He was our example. Let us read some more. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Love will cause us to behave ourselves properly, and will keep us from seeking something just for ourselves. It will not allow us to be easily provoked, and it will not allow us to imagine evil. It will cause us to rejoice in truth, rather than iniquity, and it is a strength to you. It will help you bear burdens, that your natural fleshly makeup could not handle. But when you read the part that says, "Believeth all things," you must realize that this is pointing to the truth that is preached and taught, whether you understand it all or not. The Holy Ghost in you, will keep you from setting up against truth that is preached, even if it is necessary for you to sleep on it for awhile. That verse certainly does not mean that love will cause a person to believe a lie, but it will cause you to believe all truth.

Saints: this is going to be a long message, requiring us to use more than one edition to print it, so we will just stop here for now, and pick it up in our next issue.



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