

The Seven Church Ages: A Study Guide Student Handbook by Trevor Emond
Published by Kindle Direct Publishing

www.MessageTeacher.com

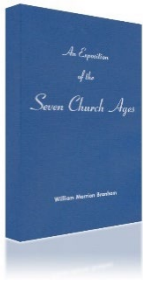
© 2019 Trevor Emond

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except as permitted by U.S. copyright law. May not be translated into other languages except by permission of the author. For permissions contact:

brotrevor@MessageTeacher.com

First Edition – June 12, 2019 Printing

ISBN 9781720817659



Curriculum based on the Exposition of the Seven Church Ages by William Branham

CURRICULUM PREPARED BY BROTHER TREVOR EMOND

History and Purpose

Not long after reading the Church Age Book for the first time, in my early 20s, I decided it would be wonderful to have a homeschool curriculum for the Church. As I read the Church Age Book, I found myself repeatedly saying, "That's why I believe that!" and I wanted everyone to experience that. This sat dormant in my mind for some years until I became a full-time Sunday School teacher, for a 10-15 year old Sunday School class.

After teaching my class through the book of Genesis, I decided it was time to teach through the book of Revelation, and there was no better starting point than the Church Age Book. Finally, it became more than an idea in my head, but a practical purpose for myself! I began to write the curriculum for my class use, but with the thought of making it in such a way it could also be used as a homeschool Bible/Biblical Literature/Church History class.

My goal is, of course, not to teach my ideas, but to guide a young person through the reading of the Church Age Book. It is the book and its teachings that should stand out to the student, and less so the lesson. My only intent with the lessons is to explain the relevant history, make the advanced concepts a little more accessible to the younger readers, and perhaps have them apply those doctrines to their lives.

So, in a large sense, the goal of this curriculum, is merely to have people read the Exposition of the Seven Church Ages, by Rev. William Marrion Branham.

How to use this curriculum

The plan is to have the students read through the Church Age Book. Most every lesson has a portion of pages to be read, starting at the beginning and reading through until the end. We are not reading "*selections*" and skipping others, every page is to be read by the student.

There are 75 lessons provided. Each lesson is generally appropriately structured for enough material to be taught in a 30 minute Sunday School class. If it is to be used as a homeschool Bible Curriculum, it would take 2 lessons per week to complete in a regular 36 week school year.

The lessons in this book are a high level overview and application of the concepts covered in the reading that will be assigned. At the end of each lesson is an assignment of Church Age Book pages to read and perhaps Scriptures. There are questions to be answered that are most often found in the Church Age Book, although there are a few instances where the material in the lesson will give the answer to the question. The student

should then read the assignment and answer the questions. I would expect the student to answer the questions while reading, and not have to answer the questions at the completion of reading. That would be VERY difficult.

Also, you will find a “*memorize*” section. This is a selection from each chapter, so at the end of the study you would have 10 selections of the Church Age Book memorized. I feel strongly that the selections I have picked to memorize each chapter are wonderful, and if I could make everyone memorize things like this I would! I would suggest each lesson either in homeschool or Sunday School begin with a recitation of the memorize selection out loud together.

There is an answer guide for each chapter included for ease of “*checking*” the students work. This can be found on MessageTeacher.com.

For Sunday School, at the beginning of each class I would review the answers to the questions, in the assignment from the week prior, and discuss. We would then move on to teaching the lesson, and trying to make the concepts real to the young people in the class.

Parent Involvement

It goes without saying, that in order for this to be profitable for the Sunday School, it will require parent involvement. I would recommend a parent meeting before you embark upon this study unless they are accustomed to Sunday School “*homework*” already.

Students must be helped to develop the habit of reading the lesson and assignment pages that will take 15-20 minutes of their week. Of course, if parents are reading with their children and discussing, we are all really winning; so this should be encouraged as well!

Also, you will find it handy to have a stack of extra Church Age Books for those that “*lose theirs*”.

Videos

A good brother suggested I create videos of me teaching each lesson. That project is underway at the time of writing of this introduction.

Feedback and Questions

Feedback and/or questions are, of course, very welcome! I can be reached at trevor@messageteacher.com

Thanks

Thanks to many friends and pastor friends of mine; they know who they are.

In particular of course, Brother Jack Duff, who the Lord used to apply constant pressure on me to finish this work.

My sweet wife, AnnaMay, who would join me at a cabin in the mountains and would scrapbook while I developed and wrote curriculum.

Thanks to Brother Nathan Bryant, my good friend and ministry buddy, who gave the curriculum a thorough review for consistency, doctrines, and grammar.

How can we forget, thanks to Brother Branham for preaching and writing the Church Age Book. Thanks to all those associated with its production (Bro. Lee Vayle, Sis. Ruth Sumner, VGR) and any others not specifically named or known about.

Thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gives us the victory. It is HE that came down and showed John on Patmos things that were to be. Blessed be His Name!

Edition Note:

The curriculum was developed with the blue cover version of the Exposition of the Seven Church Ages book. The following pages are so you may utilize the leather bound or red cover version of the book for the reading assignments.

Additionally, throughout the document, pages are referred to the reader to look back on. The Blue Cover Version is listed first, followed by a slash and then the Leather Bound/Red Cover Version follows including the paragraph number.

Sample: Page 26/19 p67. This denotes Page 26 in Blue Cover, and Page 19 paragraph 67 in the Leather/Red Cover.

Lesson	Blue Cover Version	Leather Bound/Red Cover Version
1	Pages 11 - 13, Revelation 1	Pages 1 - 3, Revelation 1
2	Pages 13 - 17, Matt. 16:13-28	Pages 3 - 8, Matt. 16:13-28
3	Revelation 2,3 Note how many angels are present.	Revelation 2,3 Note how many angels are present.
4	No reading this lesson in Church Age Book: Read Matthew 15:1-20	No reading this lesson in Church Age Book: Read Matthew 15:1-20
5	Pages 17 - 26, Deuteronomy 6:1-15	Pages 8 - 20, Deuteronomy 6:1-15
6	Pages 26 - 31	Pages 21 - 26
7	Pages 31 - 34	Pages 26 - 28
8	Pages 34 - 36, Heb. 10:19, 1 John 1:7, Rev. 1:5, Heb. 9:12	Pages 29 - 31, Heb. 10:19, 1 John 1:7, Rev. 1:5, Heb. 9:12
9	Pages 36 – 42	Pages 31 - 38
10	Pages 43 - 48	Pages 39 - 45
11	Pages 48-52, John 15	Pages 45 - 50, John 15
12	Pages 53– 55, Daniel 7	Pages 50 - 53, Daniel 7
13	Pages 55– 58, Daniel 7	Pages 54 - 58, Daniel 7
14	Pages 58– 61, Mark 16:19, Acts 7:55-56, Hebrews 1:3	Pages 58 - 61, Mark 16:19, Acts 7:55-56, Hebrews 1:3
15	Pages 61 - 65	Pages 61 - 66
16	Pages 66 - 72, Matt. 13:24-43	Pages 67 - 75, Matt. 13:24-43
17	Pages 72 - 78	Pages 76 - 83
18	Pages 78 - 83	Pages 84 - 89
19	Pages 83 - 87	Pages 89 - 94
20	Pages 88 - 91	Pages 94 - 98
21	Pages 91 - 96	Pages 98 - 104
22	Pages 96 - 109	Pages 104 - 118
23	Pages 110 - 115	Pages 119 - 124
24	Pages 115 - 119	Pages 125 - 130
25	Pages 119 - 130	Pages 130 - 141
26	Pages 130 - 133	Pages 141 - 144
27	Pages 133 - 139	Pages 145 - 150
28	Pages 139 - 148	Pages 150 - 162 (paragraph 159)
29	Pages 148 - 153	Pages 162 - 168 (paragraph 178)
30	Pages 153 - 157	Pages 168 - 172
31	Pages 158 - 162, Matt. 5:43 – 48	Pages 173 - 177, Matt. 5:43-48
32	Pages 162 - 170	Pages 177 - 187 (paragraph 54)

33	Pages 170 - 176, I Corinthians 15:40-47, Luke 21:19	Pages 187 -194, I Corinthians 15:40-47, Luke 21:19
34	Pages 176 - 180	Pages 194 - 199
35	Pages 181 - 189, Genesis 10:1-10, Genesis 11:1-9	Pages 199 - 208, Genesis 10:1-10, Genesis 11:1-9
36	Pages 189 - 197	Pages 208 - 217
37	Pages 197 - 201	Pages 217 - 222
38	Pages 201 - 208	Pages 222 - 229
39	Pages 208 - 212	Pages 229 - 234
40	Pages 213 - 220 Memorize: Psalm 119:7-16	Pages 234 - 243, Memorize: Psalm 119:7-16
41	Pages 220 - 221, Colossians 1. Memorize: Psalm 119:7-16	Pages 243 - 244, Colossians 1. Memorize: Psalm 119:7-16
42	Pages 221 - 225, James 2. Memorize: Psalm 119:7-16	Pages 245 - 249, James 2. Memorize: Psalm 119:7-16
43	Pages 225 - 231 Memorize: Psalm 119:7-16	Pages 249 - 255, Memorize: Psalm 119:7-16
44	Pages 231 - 238 Memorize: Psalm 119:7-16	Pages 256 - 264, Memorize: Psalm 119:7-16
45	Pages 238 - 242 Memorize: Psalm 119:7-16	Pages 264 - 268, Memorize: Psalm 119:7-16
46	Listening: Sardisean Church Age (first 38 minutes)	Listening: Sardisean Church Age (first 38 minutes)
47	Pages 243 - 248	Pages 269 - 275
48	Pages 248 - 252	Pages 275 - 280
49	Pages 252 - 257	Pages 280 - 286
50	Pages 257 - 262	Pages 286 - 291
51	Pages 262 - 269	Pages 292 - 300 (paragraph 113)
52	Pages 269 - 274	Pages 300 - 307 (paragraph 128)
53	Pages 274 - 282, Matt. 25.	Pages 307 - 318, Matt. 25
54	Pages 282 - 286	Pages 319 - 324
55	Pages 287 - 290 James 1,2	Pages 325 - 329, James 1, 2
56	Pages 291 - 294	Pages 329 - 333 (paragraph 33)
57	Pages 294 - 298, Genesis 7	Pages 333 - 337, Genesis 7
58	Pages 298 - 305	Pages 338 - 347 (paragraph 94)
59	Pages 306 - 312	Pages 347 - 354
60	Pages 312 - 314, Luke 21	Pages 354 - 356, Luke 21
61	Pages 314 - 318	Pages 357 - 362
62	Pages 319 - 323 Matthew 13:1-30	Pages 363 - 368, Matthew 13:1-30
63	Pages 323 - 326	Pages 368 - 372 (paragraph 31)
64	Pages 327 - 331	Pages 372 - 379
65	Pages 331 - 338	Pages 379 - 387
66	Pages 338 - 341	Pages 387 - 391 (paragraph 95)
67	Pages 341 - 345	Pages 391 - 395
68	Pages 345 - 349	Pages 395 - 400
69	Pages 349 - 356	Pages 400 - 409
70	Pages 356 - 361, Matthew 4	Pages 409 - 413, Matthew 4
71	Pages 361 - 365	Pages 413 - 418
72	Pages 366 - 369	Pages 419 - 423 (paragraph 21)
73	Pages 369 - 373	Pages 423 - 427 (paragraph 39)
74	Pages 373 - 377	Pages 427 - 432 (paragraph 59)
75	Pages 377 - 381	Pages 432 - 436

Lesson 1: Apocalypse Today.

You may have heard many people describing something unbelievable that has happened as a “*sign of the apocalypse*”. Perhaps you cleaned your room and your mother was so happy and bewildered that she said, “You cleaned your room! It’s a sure sign of the *apocalypse*”.

In the book of Revelation, there are many plagues and signs that will happen before the end of time. When people use the word “*apocalypse*” today, they mean the end of time, the last battle, Armageddon, or something like that. You cleaning your room might really be unbelievable! Much like seeing long haired locusts as big as horses! (Revelation 9:7,8) So what they are really saying is, “You’ve cleaned your room! It’s so amazing and unheard of that the end of time must be here!” However, that isn’t the real definition of *apocalypse*.

Apocalypse actually means “*unveiling*”. Imagine a famous sculptor has been working on a sculpture for months. People have been anxiously waiting to see it. The sculptor doesn’t want anyone to see it until it is finished. When he, at long last, is happy with the sculpture, he may present the piece at a museum. The museum will cover the sculpture with a large cloth, so that no one may see it until the appropriate time. They will invite many people to come see the “*unveiling*” of the sculpture. There will be a ceremony, speeches, and many other things, until finally, they will pull the sheet off of the sculpture and all who are present may behold it.

So, the sculpture has had an *apocalypse*; an *unveiling*, or *uncovering*. It is now seen, when once it was covered.

Today, we use the word *revelation* instead of *apocalypse*. Originally, the last book of the Bible was titled “*Apocalypse*”. Can you imagine referring someone to *Apocalypse* 10:7? So, *apocalypse*, or *revelation* is the *unveiling* of something previously unknown, or unseen.

If the book of Revelation (*Apocalypse*) is called that because of what it’s doing (making something known, or *unveiled*), we should ask a question then, shouldn’t we? The question we should ask is, “What didn’t we know, or see before, that the book of Revelation is telling us?” Brother Branham says, “*The uncovering is not only the revelation of the Person of Christ, but it is the revelation of His future works in the oncoming seven church ages*”.

So, God is showing John what is coming, and what He will do. Now, just because God is showing John these things, are they easy to understand? Many times, the sculptor might unveil his sculpture to an audience, but they still may not understand the MEANING behind the art. So, the sculpture is unveiled for the people to behold, but they might not yet understand everything about it.

Thank God for the promise of *Apocalypse* 10:7! It says, “*But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, **the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.***”

We can now see the “*sculpture*” that John saw, and understand the meaning behind it as well!

Assignment: Read pages 11 – 13, Revelation 1

Questions to answer

(Use complete sentences please!)

1) What is the difference between a *scribe* and an *author*? _____

2) What does the word *Apocalypse* mean? _____

3) What two things does Brother Branham say are being “*uncovered*”? _____

Memorize: “*Since it is the blood of God, it is perfect blood; and if the perfect blood is loosing us from the power and bondage and defilement of sin, then the loosing is perfect and complete.*”

Lesson 2: Importance of Revelation

Brother Branham tells us that, *“The importance of revelation by the Spirit to a true believer can never be over emphasized”*. I’d say that’s pretty important!

I Corinthians 12:3 says, *“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”*

You see, if we don’t have revelation from the Holy Ghost, we can’t even say that Jesus is Lord. Sure, we can LEARN that He is Lord; our parents, or pastor may teach us this. But you can’t really, of your own heart, say that Jesus is Lord, unless God has revealed it to you. You see how important it is?

Revelation is the foundation of the church. If you are going to build a building, you have to first pour the foundation, and make sure that it is solid. Otherwise, your building may not even be straight, and may fall down. If we want to make sure our walk with the Lord is built right (and we do), then we must have revelation from the Holy Ghost to build the right foundation.

Jesus Christ IN the church

This book of Revelation is not just a revelation of the Person of Christ, but it is also a revelation of Christ working in the church. This is why it is so powerful - it shows how Christ is going to work through OUR lives, throughout the church ages.

Special Class

Think for a moment what it means to be in a *“special class”*. What an honor and privilege it is to be put in a special class! To the world, it may seem unfair that God’s Bride might be a special class of people. Yet, how did these people become a part of this *“special class”*? This class of people have received grace to hear the prophetic insight they are given in their day. It is open to everyone to be a part of the *“special class”*, but not everyone chooses to hear the prophetic insight of their day.

The book of Revelation is given in many symbols that only a prophet can reveal. If God does not reveal it to a prophet, as He always has, we won’t know what this book of Revelation is talking about. This is exactly why it takes this *“special class”* of people to understand it.

Principle: The time is at hand

The principle we learn in our reading today is, *“The revelation of God for each age can come in that age only, and at a specific time”*. Can you imagine Moses talking about how it was going to rain for 40 days and 40 nights? What if a preacher today were to talk about a global flood? That would be silly! Yet, it is God’s Word! It **IS** God’s Word, but it was **for another day**. God granted John this Book of Revelation, that we are beginning to study, because it was at the right time to bring this revelation.

Later, we will find that when God gave John this Book of Revelation, He also spoke that a time would come when a full revealing of the mysteries in the Book would happen. That revealing of the mysteries will be God's Word for that age. It will come when "*the time is at hand*". Another lesson closes yet again with the importance of Revelation 10:7. It comes to give REVELATION to a SPECIAL CLASS at a SPECIFIC TIME.

Assignment: Read Pages 13 – 17, Matt 16:13-28

Questions to answer

- 1) What is the church built upon? _____

- 2) Before Jesus' resurrection, what kind of kingdom did the disciples think Jesus was going to have?
 - a. Earthly
 - b. Spiritual

- 3) Which two books of the Bible does Satan hate more than the others? Why? _____

- 4) Christ in the True Church is a continuation of _____.
But the Book of Revelation shows how that the antichrist spirit would come into the church and defile it making it _____, _____ and _____

- 5) What kind of an army will the people be if they get a True Revelation of the True Church? _____

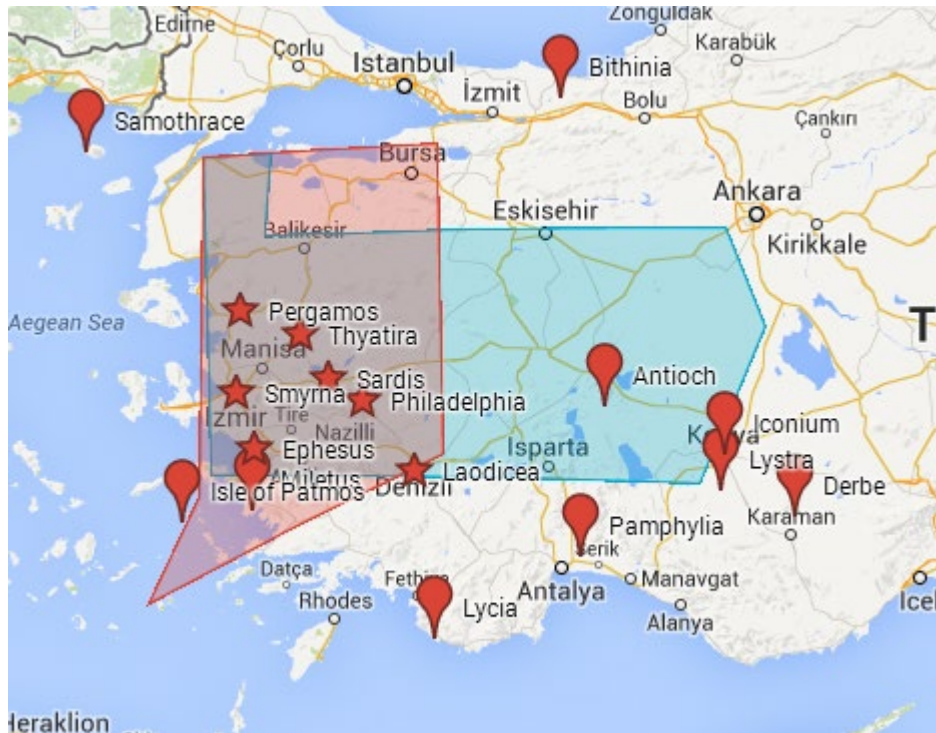
- 6) It is the revelation of God that will give you _____

- 7) Bonus Question: What is the difference between *Knowledge* and *Revelation*? _____

Memorize: "*Since it is the blood of God, it is perfect blood; and if the perfect blood is loosing us from the power and bondage and defilement of sin, then the loosing is perfect and complete.*"

Lesson 3: Seven Churches in Asia Minor

Today, we're going to look at a map and locate all the cities in Asia that are mentioned in Revelation 1:4. We're going to talk about why THESE churches are mentioned. John was told to write to these churches, but, where were they?



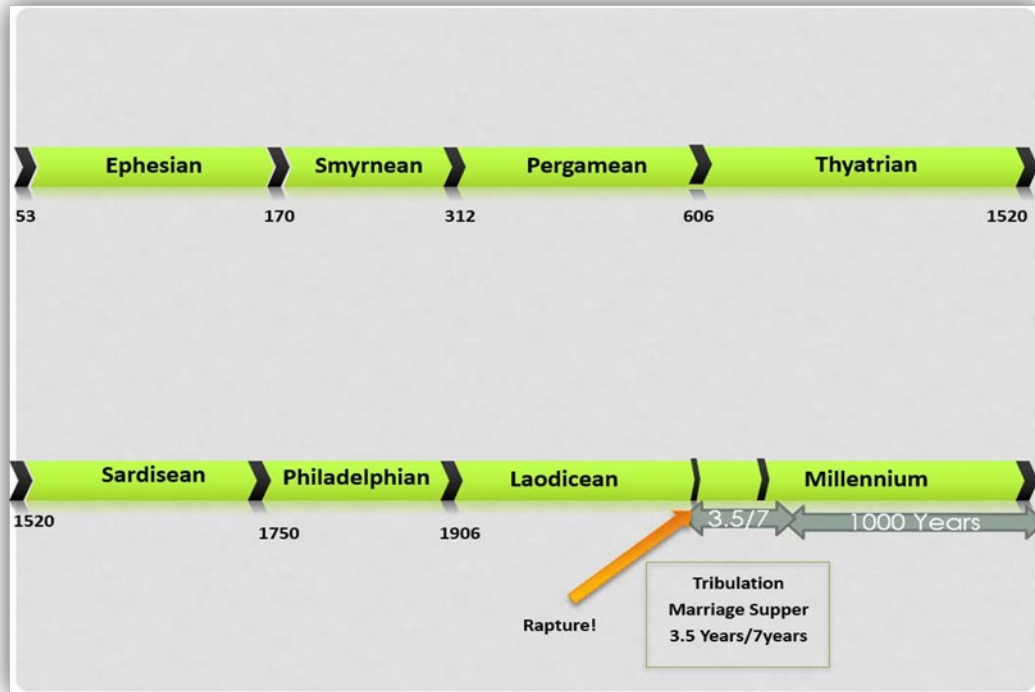
Find the seven churches in Asia that are listed in Revelation chapters 2 and 3.

Modern Day Turkey! Notice the size. Not very big! The land is about the same size as Indiana or Pennsylvania. How many cities are there?

If there were more than seven cities that had churches at that time, why did God only mention these seven? Surely there were more than just these seven churches in all of Asia Minor. Why were THEY chosen? Why not Antioch or Thessalonica?

These churches were chosen because of their unique characteristics. As we study this book, we'll really dig deep into each characteristic. For now, just understand that these cities were picked because of their characteristics. We'll find that each of these churches' characteristics are exactly the same characteristics that each of the seven church ages were going to have throughout history.

You may ask, "WAIT! What are these ages we are talking about?" I'm glad you asked; that's ultimately what we are studying! ***We will learn that each of these seven churches and their characteristics represent a time period (age) that was to come.***



Now remember, John was receiving this vision during the first age. John wasn't told that these churches represented ages, but only that he was to write to these churches. As we mentioned earlier, God was unveiling (*apocalypse*) what He was going to do, but these things were still hidden in symbol form, waiting for the messenger of the last day (Revelation 10:7) to come and reveal what was still hidden.

Each age will have a messenger that will speak God's Word for that day to it. Just like Noah, as we talked about, had a message for his day, each age receives God's Word for that day through an "angel" messenger. The seven spirits mentioned in Revelation 1:4 are the spirits that will be in each messenger.

Now, let's go through Revelation chapter 2 and 3 and notice how many angels are mentioned. How many do you find? Each angel is the messenger to that age. Do you know who the angel to our age is? William Marrison Branham.

Assignment: Read Revelation 2, 3 and note how many angels are present.

Questions

- 1) How many angels did you count in Revelation 2 and 3? _____
- 2) Another word for time period in history is an _____

Memorize: "Since it is the blood of God, it is perfect blood; and if the perfect blood is loosing us from the power and bondage and defilement of sin, then the loosing is perfect and complete."

Lesson 4: Doctrines and Creeds; What are they?

We're not just going to be studying geography, maps, and timelines in this book, but we're also going to get into some good *doctrine*. We're going to see how the devil tries to disrupt the church of God throughout history and look at some of the major points of *doctrine* that he tries to take away from the church.

Remember, if the devil can take away revelation from us, he'll make us lukewarm, cold, formal and powerless. So, we need to be sure that we look intently at the revelations that are contained in this book.

Rev. William Branham says that *doctrine* is like our backbone¹. If we don't have *doctrine*, we're like a jellyfish, all squiggly. Our faith must be firm and straight. It must be defined and correct so we can stand very straight on the Word of God.



He also tells us that, "Every church, if you don't have a *doctrine*, you're not a church"², so we've got to have some *doctrine* that defines what we believe. Can you imagine if we didn't have *doctrine*? People could believe the flying spaghetti monster is God, and without *doctrine*, how would we say that is wrong?

So, *doctrine* is how we define what we believe.

Now, how do we find this *doctrine*? We must find our *doctrine* out of the Word of God. If we find that the Word of God challenges our *doctrine*, we must take what the Word says! Brother Branham says that "*Doctrine is based on God's Word, not on experience*"³.

If our *doctrine* isn't based on God's Word, then it's based on some experience or thoughts of man. If that's the case, it's not true *doctrine*; it's really what we call a *creed*. A *creed* is a set of beliefs like a *doctrine*, but based out of man's ideas or experiences.

What if I told you that, to be a genuine Christian, you must stand on your head three times each day and pray? Now, I might give you reasons like, "Peter was crucified upside down and, surely, he prayed while dying on the cross in that way", or "I prayed standing on my head one time and God REALLY spoke to me", but nothing concretely based on the Word. Eventually, since I am so persuasive, many, many people would accept this as something all Christians must do. Imagine, large groups of churches might begin to teach this idea and publish it in a statement that says, "all Christians stand on their heads and pray three times a day". What do we have? A *creed*! There is no basis in the Bible, yet it is something that has been accepted as part of faith, without Biblical support.

Commonly, *creeds* are written down and published as a statement of faith. We'll learn more of the *Nicene Creed* or the *Apostles Creed* later. Now, a *creed* may have some good *doctrine* in it, but we need to remember that it MUST ALL be based completely on the Word of God to be true *doctrine*, and if God gives us more light on the revelation of His Word, we have to stay with His Word. Once a *creed* is defined, people will not change it, but they will accept it or reject it.

In our next lesson, we are going to learn one very important *doctrine*: The *doctrine* of Godhead.

¹59-0823 paragraph 19

²59-1216 paragraph 8

³57-0306 paragraph 4

Assignment: No reading this lesson in the Church Age Book: Read Matthew 15:1-20

Questions

Define:

Doctrine:

Creed:

Beside each statement, write doctrine or creed.

- 1) God is one person. _____
- 2) God is three persons. _____
- 3) You must wash your hands before you eat. _____ *
- 4) Elijah the prophet is coming to restore all things. _____
- 5) You must be baptized in running water such as a river or lake -- not in a pool. _____
- 6) You should be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. _____
- 7) You should be baptized three times face forward. _____
- 8) People should only be baptized with their face upwards. _____
- 9) People should be baptized by immersion. _____

*Some creeds are no doubt a good idea, but aren't something we would call doctrine.

Memorize: "Since it is the blood of God, it is perfect blood; and if the perfect blood is loosing us from the power and bondage and defilement of sin, then the loosing is perfect and complete."

Lesson 5: One God

Before getting into the Church Ages in Chapter 2 of the Book of Revelation, we will take Revelation chapter 1 and study it for a while. This is so we can know Who is talking and providing the revelation, who is writing these things down, and what the purpose is for the revelations.

Brother Branham stops at verses 4-6 and notes some doctrine to which these verses allude. This passage is telling us WHO is giving John the revelation. He tells us of a MIGHTY REVELATION the first church had – that was that God was ONE.

These days, you no doubt have heard of the “*doctrine of the trinity*”, which we should technically call a *creed*! So many people believe that God exists in a trinity, but they really don’t understand the truth of the matter. Remember, we want a nice straight backbone to our Christian walk – this is important!

We’re not going to say too much in this workbook today; we’re going to let you read the Church Age Book where Brother Branham explains the *doctrine* of the Godhead wonderfully! We’re just going to ask some questions and do a project to make sure you really grasp it.

Assignment: Read Pages 17 – 26, Deuteronomy 6:1 - 15

Complete the how many thrones in Revelation worksheet.

Questions

- 1) Who was the father of Jesus? _____

- 2) At what event and at what date did the idea that God was three persons become a foundational doctrine? _____ A.D.

- 3) The Bible teaches that God was in Christ, the body was _____.

- 4) Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are just _____.

- 5) On earth Jesus was a _____. In heaven He is the _____ and coming back to earth, He is _____.

- 6) Right now, Christ as a prophet is He that _____. Christ as a priest is He that _____. Christ as King is He that _____.

Memorize: *“Since it is the blood of God, it is perfect blood; and if the perfect blood is loosing us from the power and bondage and defilement of sin, then the loosing is perfect and complete.”*

Worksheet: How many thrones?

Directions: In the verses below, highlight the words “throne” or “thrones”

John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; (Revelation 1:4)

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. (Revelation 3:21)

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. (Revelation 4:2)

And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. (Revelation 4:3)

And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. (Revelation 4:4)

And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. (Revelation 4:5)

And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. (Revelation 4:6)

And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, (Revelation 4:9)

The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, (Revelation 4:10)

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. (Revelation 5:1)

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. (Revelation 5:6-7)

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; (Revelation 5:11)

And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. (Revelation 5:13)

And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: (Revelation 6:16)

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. (Revelation 7:9,10)

And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, (Revelation 7:11)

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. (Revelation 7:15)

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Revelation 7:17)

And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. (Revelation 8:3)

And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. (Revelation 12:5)

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. (Revelation 14:3)

And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. (Revelation 14:5)

And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. (Revelation 16:17)

And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. (Revelation 19:4)

And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. (Revelation 19:5)

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4)

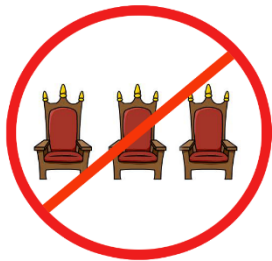
And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. (Revelation 20:11)

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. (Revelation 21:5)

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. (Revelation 22:1)

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: (Revelation 22:3)

- 1) How many times did you find the word throne? _____
- 2) How many times did you find the word thrones? _____
- 3) Of the times that you saw the word thrones, whose thrones were they? _____



So, if God has only one throne, we can know that God is one. There isn't a throne for God the Father, a smaller one for God the Son, and one for the Holy Spirit. They are **ONE PERSON!!**

Lesson 6: Holy Man, Holy men? Will the real holy one please stand up?

Do you ever feel like you are worthless? Do you ever feel like God could never use you? Maybe you've felt like you've sinned too much or just don't have enough talents. Well, that's simply not true!

Because of the *doctrine* we are learning in this book, we can see that Jesus Christ is God, and that when He arose, He poured out His Spirit upon all flesh. Brother Branham tells us "*The Holy Man is Christ, the Holy Spirit, in us.*"¹

What that tells us is that if you are born again and filled with the Holy Spirit, you have the Holy One inside of you. He can fulfill his purposes through you, because He is living in you.

What this also tells us is that we don't have to subject ourselves to the authority of some "*holy man*" such as a pope, priest, bishop, or even a pastor. Now, we ought to have Godly respect to men who give their lives to study the Word and preach the Gospel. But, if you are filled with the Holy One Himself, He makes you holy and you don't need to rely on the blessings or pronouncements of so called "*holy men*".

Brother Branham states, "*The whole true congregation of the Lord is holy, because of the presence of the Holy Spirit*"². Isn't it wonderful that God Himself would come to dwell with man as Jesus, and then later to dwell in man as the Holy Spirit!?

In the reading for this lesson, you will read how Brother Branham is bringing the *doctrine* of Godhead right down to using the correct name for water baptism. Here is where this *doctrine* starts to really be applied. Now, if you begin to have a conversation with someone who believes the "*doctrine of the trinity*" (which is actually a *creed!*), you may find that as you explain that God is one, they agree with you! You'll then be asking yourself, "Wait...I thought they believed in three Gods"?

You could even mention that you don't believe God is three separate people. You could ask them, "If I pray to God the Father, does He have to tell God the Son what I said?" It is likely they will say "No, that is not the case, because it is one God". If they were being honest, they'd probably realize that they don't really believe God is three distinct persons. Typically, the problem they have will only manifest itself when it comes to what name we baptize in.

Trinitarians will baptize in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We baptize in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. As you read today, you'll understand that baptism in the name of the "Lord Jesus Christ" was how the original church in the book of Acts and onward baptized, until the time of the Nicene Council.

It is interesting to observe that Trinitarians will do almost everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, as it says to do in Colossians 3:17. *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him”*. So, if you go to a Christian run coffee shop, or ice cream parlor, they will proudly serve you coffee or ice cream in the name of the Lord Jesus. Everything they do, they’ll do in the name of the Lord Jesus. Yet, they will only baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost! This is because they have accepted the *Nicene creed* of three Gods, and have to baptize that way.

As you talk with them, they will likely (not always) understand Godhead in a similar way to what Brother Branham describes in this book. But, when it comes to what name to baptize in, they will stay with their God in three persons *creed*.

This sure makes us thankful for revelation in our lives, doesn’t it? That’s what we need to make His Word real to us.

Assignment: Read pages 26 – 31

Questions

- 1) Who is Brother Branham referring to when he says “*Each one has something to say. Each has a work, each has a ministry.*” _____

- 2) The whole congregation of the Lord is holy because of the presence of the _____.

- 3) _____ of the Old Testament is _____ of the New.

- 4) (Yes/No) Do you need revelation to see the truth about Godhead? _____

- 5) (Yes/No) Do you need revelation to see the truth about water baptism? _____

- 6) We need to call on God for _____ more than _____.

- 7) We must also accept the fact that we by our union with Him have become _____
_____.

Memorize: “*Since it is the blood of God, it is perfect blood; and if the perfect blood is loosing us from the power and bondage and defilement of sin, then the loosing is perfect and complete.*”

¹ 60-1204M paragraph 228 (and in CAB text)

² CAB page 26 paragraph 2/19 p67

Lesson 7: Authentic Scripture

In today's reading, Brother Branham deals with the authenticity of Scripture. Atheists and the culture today will pose the question "How do we know the Bible hasn't changed over time?". It seems an honest question, because 2,000 years is quite a long time for something not to change. However, we have source manuscripts for the Bible in both Greek and Aramaic, and when translated directly to English, these both agree with the modern King James Bible. If the text had changed over time, then these translations would in no way agree; but they do!

On the subject of authenticity of Scripture, it would be good for us to look at a few topics of how we can trust that the Scriptures are true. Has the devil ever planted the thought in your mind, "How do I know this is all really true?" Let's look at some of the physical (meaning, not by spiritual revelation which is of most importance) reasons we can trust that the Scriptures, particularly the New Testament, are true.

Honesty: Because they say they are.

We can trust the Scriptures are true because they say they are! Sounds too easy, right? Think for a moment to the last fairy tale you read. How does it start? "*A long time ago, in some far off distant land*". The author is telling you this story isn't real in the opening line. This makes the story easier for you to accept. The New Testament doesn't do that. Look at the beginning of the book of Luke, read chapter 1:1-5

Luke is being very plain that this is an account of facts from eyewitnesses. He's telling us this isn't just some fairy tale, but it is truth. There is "*certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed*". He's also telling us verifiable historical facts and times, "*in the days of Herod*".

Peter also tells us the same thing in 2 Peter 1:16. Go ahead and look that passage up as well.

History is left to the Victors?

Another reason we can trust the Bible is the amount of "embarrassing material" we find. When someone writes a history, they usually try to make certain not to tell any embarrassing facts or things that make them look bad or untrustworthy. We don't find this in the Bible.

Consider the following list:

- Peter denies Jesus (Mark 14:70)
- Jesus calls Peter *Satan!* (Matt. 16:23)
- James and John want to reign with Jesus (Mk. 10:32-43)
- Disciples don't understand Jesus' teaching (Mk. 4:1-12)
- Women (who at the time were regarded as untrustworthy) discover the empty tomb (John 20)

There is so much material that would have been left out if someone wasn't taking pains to report the truth to us.

How do we know the Bible hasn't CHANGED?

To know this, we can look at a few things:

- 1) How much time has passed between original copies and today's copies?

Using this test, the Bible is more reliable than any history out there. We can trust the Bible more than we can trust any historical document of Julius Ceaser. We have copies dating back to 50 years from the time of writing for Scripture, but what about Julius Ceasar? 1,000 years from the time of writing. No one disputes Julius Ceasar's existence, but they will doubt the Bible.

- 2) How many copies do we have and do they agree?

Using this test, the Bible is STILL more reliable than any other manuscript out there. We have 24,536 copies of the New Testament. The next most reliable book by number of copies is Homer's "The Illiad" with 643 copies.

- 3) Do other sources agree?

With this test, the Bible continues to be reliable. Other sources, even non-Christian sources quote from and reference the Bible, including stories of Jesus life corroborating with the testament of Scripture.

- 4) Do the translations agree?

Finally, as we have read in this portion of the Church Age Book, Brother Branham references the Lamsa translation of the Bible. This translation is taken from old Aramaic language texts directly to English. We find that the translation completely agrees with the translation of the KJV, which is Greek to Latin to English. If these two versions agree side by side through different translation paths, we can trust the Bible has been translated correctly.

Assignment: Read Pages 31 – 34

Questions

- 1) He gave the Greeks with a universal language, the Jews with a true religion, and the Romans with an empire and highways. Thus, we have _____

- 2) (True/False) We will get the true meaning of Scripture if we study and compare the Scripture texts really really hard. _____

- 3) We have the _____ today and no man dares take from it, or add to it.

- 4) Oh, if the church could only get a fresh revelation and become by it the living word manifested, _____
_____ and glorify God our Father in heaven.

Memorize: *“Since it is the blood of God, it is perfect blood; and if the perfect blood is loosing us from the power and bondage and defilement of sin, then the loosing is perfect and complete.”*

Lesson 8: Loosed From Sin

Do you realize that you have no doubt broken the commandments of God many times throughout your life? Stop and reflect for a moment; how many times have you lied to your parents or friends? Been disrespectful to your parents? Worshipped something other than God in your heart?

These are things we all have done because we were born with the wrong nature. No one had to teach us how to lie – we figured that out on our own!

So, we easily admit that we're all sinners in need of salvation. We know that the Bible says that "*ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God*". We also know "*the wages of sin is death*". So, we have a real problem, don't we? Not only do we need someone to come and free us from the punishment of sins, but from the nature that causes us to do those sins!

Over the last few lessons, we learned about the mystery of Godhead and that God is ONE God, ONE Person. We learn today how to apply these truths to our lives. Since Jesus was and is God, and it was Jesus that shed His Blood for us, then we are saved by the Blood of God. That Blood is perfect because Christ is perfect. If the Blood by which we're saved is perfect, then it doesn't halfway save. It doesn't halfway cleanse. It does it ALL THE WAY. You are free from sin if you're under His Blood. Isn't that wonderful?

Look back on the Church Age Book page 31/24 p100 now. Who has become the righteousness of Christ? We have. Jesus became sin for us that we might become HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS! So, just from learning about the Godhead, we now can see that everything Jesus did for us was God Himself doing these things for us.

That's why it is so important to understand that God is ONE. If Jesus was just a prophet like the Jews or Jehovah Witnesses would tell us, then we could worry about whether His sacrifice for us was good enough. Since Jesus IS GOD, we know we are completely cleansed and made into God's own righteousness. Similar to what we learned last week, since Jesus IS GOD, if He is in us, we are holy.

Take it one step further now: He's made YOU a king and a priest! Not only are you clean and His righteousness, but He now gives you a position of spending your life as a sweet offering to Him.

Assignment: Read Pages 34 - 36, Heb. 10:19, 1 John 1:7, Rev. 1:5, Heb. 9:12

Questions

- 1) By Whose blood are you saved? _____

- 2) Who did God entrust His plan of salvation to when Adam fell? _____

- 3) Did you do anything to merit becoming a priest or a king? _____

- 4) Who made you a priest and king? _____

- 5) We have been _____ in Him to be children like unto our Father.

Memorize: *“Since it is the blood of God, it is perfect blood; and if the perfect blood is loosing us from the power and bondage and defilement of sin, then the loosing is perfect and complete.”*

Lesson 9: The Coming God – The One whom they pierced

In today's lesson, Brother Branham types Jesus Christ, the coming One, to the story of Joseph. I'd like to start out looking at the story of Joseph. Stop right here and read Genesis 41 enough to know the story and look closely at verses 44 and 45.

"...and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On."

Wait; What? Joseph not only had an Egyptian wife, but she was the daughter of an idolatrous priest, and everybody is ok with this?

Surely something is wrong here. The Hebrews were supposed to marry those of their own people. Look at Isaac; look at Jacob. Isaac and Rebekah didn't like Esau's wives. They were NOT supposed to marry like that. Yet the Bible is very silent on the matter. There is no word of disapproval of this arrangement. Why?

Today, we find ourselves recipients of God's grace that He turned from the Jews temporarily for the salvation of the Gentiles.

Brother Branham compares this story of Joseph with the story of Jesus coming back to the Jews in Zechariah 12:9-14. He also mentions Zechariah 13:6 – *"What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."*

Just as Joseph's brothers persecuted Joseph, so did the Jews persecute Jesus. Just as Joseph received a Gentile bride, so did Jesus. Joseph's life was a perfect type of Christ's. Since we're happy today that Jesus has taken a Gentile Bride, we can see that it was definitely ok for Joseph to take a Gentile Bride – it was God's plan all along.

How does this relate to His coming? While Joseph made himself known to his brothers, his wife was in the palace. When Jesus makes Himself known to the Jews, we'll be in the palace having a wedding supper. During this marvelous time for us, the Jews will finally realize they pierced and crucified the very One they were looking for all along.

Finally, together with Christ and the 144,000, we'll all have a wonderful thousand-year millennium!

Assignment: Read Pages 36 - 42

Questions

- 1) Will everyone see Jesus at the Rapture? _____
- 2) The sleeping virgins will be _____.
- 3) In His presence is _____.
- 4) *Challenge:* In the type of Joseph's two sons being blessed, which son represents the Gentiles?

- 5) (Yes/No) Are the 144,000 a part of the Bride? _____
- 6) (Yes/No) Will the 144,000 be in the millennium? _____
- 7) How is this last Gentile age going out? _____

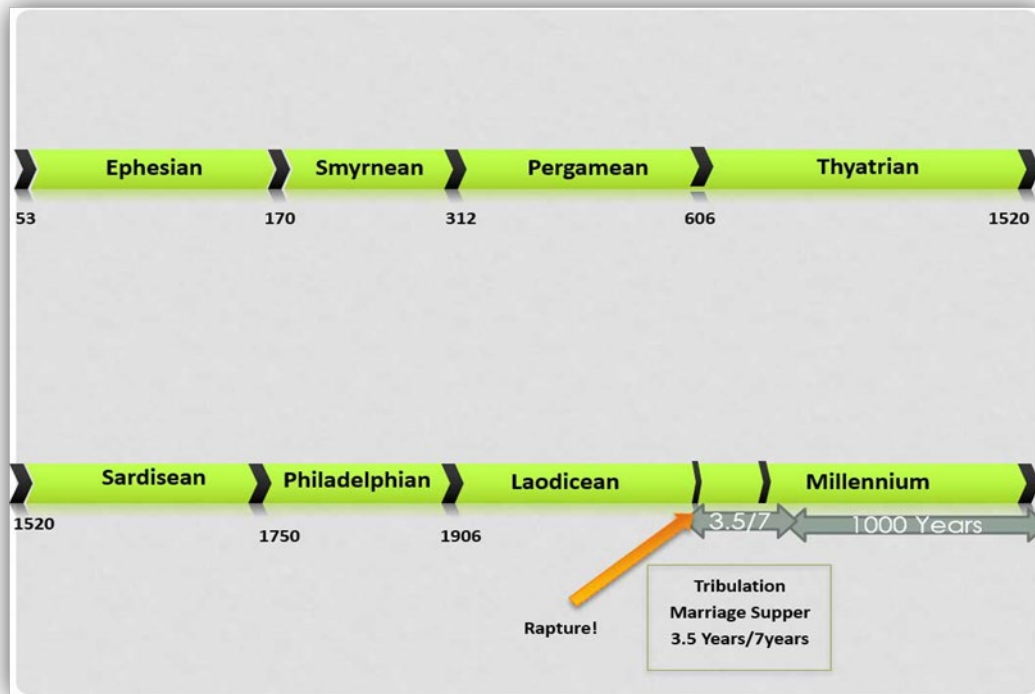
Memorize: *"Since it is the blood of God, it is perfect blood; and if the perfect blood is loosing us from the power and bondage and defilement of sin, then the loosing is perfect and complete."*

Congratulations! You finished Chapter 1!

Lesson 10: In the Spirit on the Lord's Day

Today, we begin Chapter 2 of the Church Age Book. This will cover Revelation chapter 1 verses 9 through 20. Don't forget what God is unveiling to us (*Apocalypse!* Remember lesson 1?) in this series: "*Now the uncovering is not only the revelation of the Person of Christ, but it is THE REVELATION OF HIS FUTURE WORKS IN THE ONCOMING SEVEN CHURCH AGES.*" We are going to learn much more about the Person of Christ in this chapter.

We begin with more concrete evidence of why we can trust that the Bible is true. John gives us a verifiable place of where he was: the Isle of Patmos. This was a prison island much like Alcatraz, which used to be off the coast of California in the United States.



John's vision occurred over a period of two years, A.D. 95-96

Spirit on the Lord's Day

When was the last time you really got in the Spirit? Brother Branham says in this chapter that "*I was in the Spirit*" is the whole of the Christian Life. Isn't that amazing? Your whole Christian life ought to be about getting into the Spirit.

Of course, we can compare this with going to a ball game. People scream and shout for their team and get really excited! When was the last time you got REALLY excited about the Word of God? If you haven't you need to get in the Spirit! There's so much goodness in God's Word.

If we really want to grasp what God is unveiling (*Apocalypse!*) to us in the book of Revelations, we really need to get in the Spirit.

What is it when we get in the Spirit? It is when we come into the presence of God, a fresh and real presence, sober and serious, but full of Joy! It's an atmosphere that we get into, just as people get into an atmosphere at a ball game. When we come into an atmosphere of His Spirit, we come into an atmosphere of faith and expectancy. It's an atmosphere that gets excited about what God's going to do! The world can get really emotional about winning a ball game and we can get really emotional about the things of Christ. Just the other day, I was so excited about the following verse: "*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*" (Hebrews 4:15,16) It thrilled me to think that we can come before His throne BOLDLY because He was tempted like we were. I can come boldly because God understands the temptations that I face. He was just like me. I got in the Spirit of it! It felt really great to consider that and the verse became more real to me. We receive revelation when we get in the Spirit!

Do you know that Brother Branham says, "*The Christian experience is based solemnly and wholly upon rest.*"¹? Do you know that there is one thing the Bible instructs us to labor in? Hebrews 4:11 tells us to "*labor to enter into that rest*". The thing we work at as Christians is resting! How do we rest? What do we do to rest? We quit trying to do works on our own and we get into the Spirit!

As you do your reading in the Church Age Book for this lesson, pay attention to what Brother Branham is saying on page 48/45 p25 of the Church Age Book about what the "*Lord's Day*" is versus "*The Day of the Lord*". We will build on this in future lessons. For now, understand we're not talking about Saturday or Sunday, but after the "*Day of Man*" is over. During the millennial reign will be a wonderful time that truly will be "*The Lord's Day*"!

Assignment: Read Pages 43 - 48

Questions

- 1) What is the "*First step*"? _____
- 2) Christian hearts and emotions are on what? _____
- 3) It is you _____ and God _____.
- 4) There is a cry _____ for that rest.
- 5) What is the difference between "*The Day of the Lord*" and "*The Lord's Day*" _____

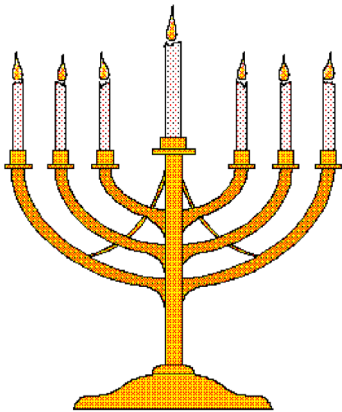
Memorize: *Every true believer is in the hand of God and can draw from His love and power, and receive the full benefit of all that God is to the believer. What God gives the messenger, and how He blesses and uses the messenger, is an example to all believers of His goodness and care to ALL members of His body.*

¹56-0212 paragraph 31

Lesson 11: The Golden Lampstands

Today, we read about the announcement that was as a trumpet. It was calling attention to something! It was calling attention to what was about to be seen. John was given the command to write down the things he is about to see.

What John sees first were the seven golden candlesticks. What do you think of when you think of candlesticks? I bet you think of something like this:



Yes, that sure fits this bill – seven candles, golden – looks right doesn't it? But there's a problem here. The flames will eventually go out as the candles burn down.

Brother Branham takes us over to Zechariah 4 to get a better description of these candlesticks. He describes them more as "lampholders".

ZECHARIAH 4:1 - 6

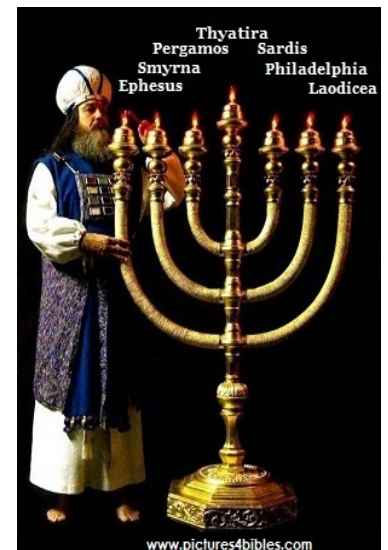
And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon

the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

So here we have a description of a candlestick that really looks more like this:

All seven "candlesticks" hold wicks that extend down into the main bowl of oil at the bottom. Have you ever seen an old oil lamp with a wick in it? That's what is described here: seven "oil lamps" connected together and fashioned out of pure gold.

So, now that we have a picture of what it is John is seeing, what is the meaning behind them? We need the *apocalypse (unveiling!)* of what is being presented. Well, Brother Branham is showing us that it wasn't candlesticks with wax candles but lampholders with wicks dipping down into a central pot of oil. He explains that our lives are like these golden candlesticks; our lives draw oil of the Holy Ghost out of the same source. I don't draw from one oil reservoir and you from another. We're all drawing oil, the fuel for the flame, from the same place.



Oh, I hope we all draw deeply from the oil of the Holy Ghost, that the flame we are presenting to the world in a dark hour may be very bright!

Next, Brother Branham compares this drawing from the same source to a citrus tree that has had other fruits grafted in. No doubt you've heard Brother Branham describe this on tape. He was at Brother John Sharrit's Ranch in Phoenix, AZ and saw a funny looking tree. This tree had oranges, lemons, grapefruit and tangerines on it. Brother Branham asked how that happened and Brother Sharrit told him the fruits were "grafted in". Here's one account of the story:

*He said, "Well, I grafted them. They're all citrus, so I grafted them."
I said, "Now, next spring, or the next time it bears, it being originally a orange tree, then it will bring forth... all these branches will bring forth oranges?"*

He said, "No, no. Huh-uh. No. It'll bring forth what kind of branch that's in it." Said, "If it's--if it's a--if it's a lemon branch in a orange tree, yet it'll bear lemons." And said, "If it's a--if it's a tangerine branch, it'll bear tangerines, living on the same life."

I said, "Then it'll never bear no more oranges?"

He said, "Oh, yes. When the original tree puts forth one of its original branches, it'll bear oranges."

I said, "Praise be to God; that's it." (62-0609e Letting Off the Pressure)



From this we can see that, not only should we draw from the Life of the Tree (or the Oil in the lampstand), but that we want to be an original fruit of the Tree. We should not be a similar fruit that can draw from the same Life, but a true born orange. So, draw from the Oil in the lampstand, draw from the Life of the Vine, and be an original!

Assignment: Read pages 48 - 52, John 15

Questions

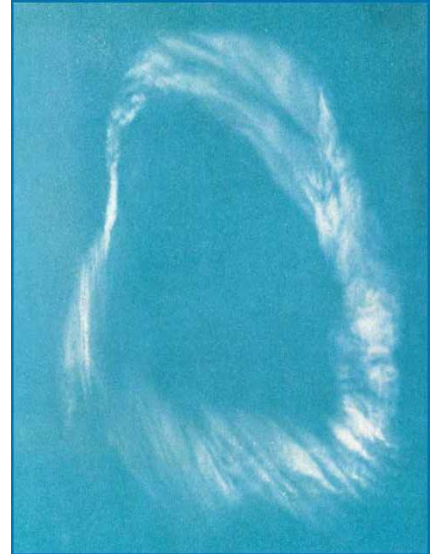
- 1) John did not say it was a trumpet, he said: _____
- 2) You will recognize that voice when He calls if: _____
- 3) If you can ever really get to see _____ you will be seeing _____.
- 4) Describe how the lamps were lit and in what order. _____

- 5) Denominations which are man directed cannot be: _____
- 6) (Yes/No) Is your life dramatically depicted in the seven golden candlesticks? _____
- 7) Who else is depicted in the seven golden candlesticks? _____

Memorize: *“Every true believer is in the hand of God and can draw from His love and power, and receive the full benefit of all that God is to the believer. What God gives the messenger, and how He blesses and uses the messenger, is an example to all believers of His goodness and care to ALL members of His body.”*

Lesson 12: Prophet, Priest, King...And Judge

Have you ever done anything wrong? Ok, so that was a dumb question. Of course you have! How about rough-housing around with your sibling, and a lamp was broken? You both scatter, but your mother, hearing the noise, comes down to inspect. She, seeing the shattered remains of a precious family heirloom on the floor, exclaims, “Children! I have told you time and time again not to rough house in the living room! You both are sentenced to your room and seven days of hard labor. You will do supper dishes every day this week”! You look at your mother and see her eyes have flashed in stern rebuke. Those soft eyes that so tenderly look at you and give comfort in times of hurting, the eyes that smile at you when, as a child, you achieve something you’ve never done before, those eyes now are looking at you in judgment. It is the same mother you’ve always had, but her role of caretaker, dinner maker, comforter has changed temporarily (for this week anyhow) to the role of judge.



In Revelation 1:13-14, we are given a picture of Who this is based on how He is dressed and presents Himself. Did you know many times how we dress and present ourselves gives a good indication of who we are on the inside? Think about that for a minute! I don’t want to dwell on that too long, but it certainly is a lesson we can take from this. Are you dressing in bright flashy clothing all the time? You probably want to be noticed. Are you fixing your hair so that it falls in front of your face, and wearing a hoodie – what are you hiding?

So, we see that the *“one like unto the son of man”* has presented Himself with a *“garment down to the foot and He is girt about the paps with a golden girdle”*. So, in today’s language, this brings up a couple of questions, doesn’t it? What is this golden girdle, and what are the paps? The paps are typically translated as breast or chest area. Brother Branham tells us this golden girdle is tied around the shoulders, thus, covering the chest area of the judge. The golden girdle is basically worn as an apron when the priest is in service. But it looks more like a shawl when He is sitting as a judge.

So, Who is this sitting as the Judge? Is this the Father? Or is this the Son? Well, as we know, God is ONE but He created a body to dwell in called Jesus. God in this body is now sitting as the Judge.

In the book of Daniel chapter 7, we get a look of God sitting on the throne as a judge with white hair. Why does God have white hair? Is it because He is really, really, really, really, really old? NO! God is eternal – He doesn’t age. Similarly, we see Christ, the Son of Man, here in Revelation 1, and John says He has hair white as wool. Is Christ old? Is it because Christ is in His glorified body? It is neither of those. The white hair is a sign of experience, honor, and wisdom. It is the symbol of the qualification of a judge. Daniel also notes that he sees the Son of Man coming in clouds. Now, where have we seen this before?

Ah, yes, we’ve seen the Son of Man appear in the clouds recently, haven’t we? Brother Branham links these two events together. He tells us that *“Jehovah of the Old Testament is Jesus of the New Testament.”*¹ John 5:22 says,

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:” So, the Father, from back in the book of Daniel, has now committed to Jesus all judgment and authority. He is the one who died for our sins, so the judgment is now His. It is His because He is the New Testament expression of God. He is the SAME!

Today, we finally note the fiery eyes. We talked about how your mother’s eyes might look at you when you are in trouble, but they are the same eyes that look at you with tender love and care at other times. Even so it is with Christ; the eyes that wept with tears at the grave of Lazarus, the eyes that looked upon His crucifiers and besought the Lord “Father, forgive them” – those eyes are now flaming with fire as He is ready to judge the earth.

God’s love is long suffering, patient, and kind, but there comes a time when He MUST judge. If He never judged, it would show He did not care about injustice. God loves justice because He is holy. John was in the Lord’s Day looking upon the Day of the Lord when He comes not as Prophet, not as Priest, not as King – but as Judge.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 53 – 55, Daniel 7

Questions

- 1) Having the girdle around the shoulders signifies what? _____
- 2) Does every attribute of Christ John sees in this vision have significance? _____
- 3) (True/False) White hair means that God is very old. _____
- 4) What does the long robe signify? _____
- 5) What emotion did Christ manifest the most? _____
- 6) *Consider:* How does the answer to question five make you feel about His eyes being flames of fire later?

- 7) (Yes/No) Do you think we have a long time to get ready before John’s vision in Revelation 1 is fulfilled?

Memorize: *“Every true believer is in the hand of God and can draw from His love and power, and receive the full benefit of all that God is to the believer. What God gives the messenger, and how He blesses and uses the messenger, is an example to all believers of His goodness and care to ALL members of His body.”*

¹ 61-0827 paragraph 36 (and others)

Lesson 13: Feet of Brass – Voice of Many Waters

Have you ever wondered what the first verse of the song “Battle Hymn of the Republic” really means?

*Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.*

What does that second line mean? “*He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored*”. That certainly does not sound like the God of Love that we serve, does it? However, as we noted in the last lesson, we must remember, that the same eyes that filled with tears must become eyes of fire at some point. If God never turns to the judgment of the wicked, He is not loving because He would not be just. He is loving and just, however, so He does and will, with great finality, punish the evil doer.

So, what is this “*vintage*” and “*grapes of wrath*”? These terms are word pictures that make us think of the way that wine is made. The old vinedressers would harvest all the grapes and put them in large tubs. Then, people would get in the tubs and smash the grapes with their feet. (Your communion wine is not made this way, I’m sure.) The grape juice will strain out the bottom of the tub into the container where they will bottle and age the wine into a nice vintage. Vintage simply means wine of a particular year and quality.

Think of this as grapes of wrath now. It is God who climbs into the tub and smashes the grapes. He trampled and was trampled when He came and died on the cross. He trampled out OUR sins, we who have accepted the atonement of Christ on the Cross. The bottom of His robe is stained from the crimson color of the grapes – His own Blood from the body of Jesus.

Now those feet are feet of brass. They will stand on the earth one day and trample out his enemies. Why are they brass? All through the Bible, brass represents judgment. In the story of the Serpent of Brass on the pole in Moses’ day, the brass meant judgment passed. Those who looked on it lived. In the temple, the altar where the sacrifices were burnt was made of brass. In Elijah’s day, when there was no rain, the skies were referred to as brass. Brass is a hard metal and it also will not change once it has been created. Once God steps upon this earth with the Feet of Brass, He will not change. No pleading will move Him; there will be no discussion, no negotiations – He will tread on His enemies, those who have rejected Him for the last time.

Perhaps now if you get in trouble at home, you can plead or promise to be good, and you MIGHT get by with something, or a reduced punishment. Not so on the Day of the Lord. The Brass Feet WILL TRAMPLE. Brother Branham gives a passionate plea at the end of this section, “*Repent before it is too late.*”

Voice of Many Waters

In the Scriptures, waters represent multitudes of people. The *voice of many waters* is the individual voices of all the Christians, the ministers, and the messengers through the ages which are now witnessing against those who have come into the judgment. The atheist, the agnostic, and the foolish virgin will all be there hearing the voices of those they rejected in their lives – those who have warned them to come to Christ.

Right now your voice and your life are a witness to those around you. Perhaps you may speak to someone to tell them about Christ, or to tell them the Bible says something they are doing is wrong. Many times, they do not want to hear it – they want to continue their life, ignoring the call of God upon their heart. Your voice will be heard again on the Day of the Lord. It will be part of the *voice of many waters*. When you speak the Word of God to those around you, you are part of HIS VOICE.

There is always more than one way to receive something. When a minister cries out “*Repent or perish, flee to Christ from the wrath that is to come,*” many of us understand that God loves us and wants to change us and make us better. Others hear it and think God is mean and angry. It has been the same throughout all the ages. The waters always divide people. During Noah’s time, the waters saved Noah from the world and brought him to a “new world”, where the influences of sin were not as prominent. But those same waters drowned everyone else.

Your words for Christ may not always be received. They WILL have an impact, though. It also serves as a reminder to us that we must HEAR HIS VOICE, no matter who speaks It to us.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 55 – 58

Questions

- 1) What did the Brazen serpent symbolize? _____
- 2) Brass speaks of _____.
- 3) The foundation of the altar was made of brass. What does the foundation typify? _____

- 4) Were there sinners when judgment was passed on to Christ? _____
- 5) He _____ as no man had ever _____.
- 6) These voices are the voices of the _____.
- 7) It will be the voice of _____ rising in judgment against the sinner.
- 8) The voices of the seven messengers will be heard _____.
- 9) Someday we will hear that same sweet voice speak, not in _____ but in _____.

Memorize: *“Every true believer is in the hand of God and can draw from His love and power, and receive the full benefit of all that God is to the believer. What God gives the messenger, and how He blesses and uses the messenger, is an example to all believers of His goodness and care to ALL members of His body.”*

Lesson 14: Right hand holding the Seven Stars – Two Edged Sword

Today, we are studying the 5th and 6th attribute out of the seven-fold personage of Christ. So far, we have covered:

- 1) *Hair White as Snow (as wool)*
- 2) *Eyes of Fire*
- 3) *Feet as Brass*
- 4) *Voice as the Sound of Many Waters*

What I really love, is how Brother Branham connects these things to us so many times. Christ truly was the first born of many brethren and His attributes must become our attributes as well. The *voice of many waters* represents not just the voices of the seven messengers, but it will be your voice and mine as well.

So, today, we see the same connection directly to our lives in the seven stars in Christ's right hand. First, let's look at what the right hand represents. Remember, all these things are word pictures or types that mean something to us.

Let's look at another Scripture, "*Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven*". (Matthew 26:64)

This passage in Matthew tells us exactly what the right hand is. It is the position of power. It is the position of authority.

Now, what are these stars? Well, this is easy. Revelation 1:20 makes this very plain: "*The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches*" Brother Branham tells us these angels are **messengers**.

So, let's put this all together. We see, sitting in the position of power and authority of Christ, seven messengers. Not only do we see Revelation chapter 1 tell us that the seven messengers were in the control of Christ, but it also tells us the position of authority they had. What does it represent that Christ is "*Set down on the right hand of God*"? This is the same picture. These seven stars are under His control and speak with His authority.

What else can we see from this? If they are in Christ's right hand do you think any harm can come to them? No way! They are completely under the protection of Christ. They can withstand the pressure of the world and the battle of the enemy because they are safe in His care. Brother Branham then tells us that "*EVERY TRUE BELIEVER is in the hand of God.*" These seven stars are examples for all believers.

When Brother Branham preached the Patmos Vision sermon, he said this: "*And the Word was made flesh and dwelled among us.*" *And now the Word's made flesh in His Church, dwelling among us. His angels in His hand, minister. God is depending upon His Church. God is relying on us of this age to bring this Gospel Light to a dying, demon-bound, traditional world. God is laying the burden on me and you.*"

Just as you are part of that *voice of many waters*, you are safe in His hand. You can speak His Words to a dying, demon-bound world. What we see for the messengers is an example for all believers!

The Two Edged Sword

"...and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword"

What picture do we see here? A sharp sword proceeding out of His mouth. This is another easy one to identify in the Scriptures. Hebrews 4:12 says, *"the Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword."* There is a connection between a sharp sword and the Word of God. This is why the sword comes out of His mouth, because it is the WORD. We speak through our mouths. Words are very powerful; they can cut and destroy far more than a real sword. Look at James 3:6 *"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."* The wrong words can set on fire the course of nature. Truly, when God speaks it is a sharp two-edged sword!!

How does God heal? Look at Psalms 107:20. *"He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions."*

Now we are through six out of the seven personages of Christ. Let's look at the picture so far! We see Christ as a Judge with His white hair. We see those eyes that once wept are now *flames of fire*. We see His feet are hardened brass ready to trample His enemies in judgment. We hear the *voice of many waters* echoing out the testimony of those who warned others to flee from the wrath to come and accept Christ. We see Him holding the seven messengers in a position of power and authority, and we see the power of the Words that come from His mouth. What an awesome picture is created here!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 58 – 61, Mark 16:19, Acts 7:55,56, Hebrews 1:3

Questions

- 1) As each age pulled away from God, what did the messenger do? _____

- 2) *"Their strength was from the Lord or they never could have stemmed the tide."* What do you think this means? _____

- 3) What will happen to those that rest in the Word and say they believe it but don't live it? _____

Memorize: *"Every true believer is in the hand of God and can draw from His love and power, and receive the full benefit of all that God is to the believer. What God gives the messenger, and how He blesses and uses the messenger, is an example to all believers of His goodness and care to ALL members of His body. "*

Lesson 15: His Face like the Sun

“And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” (Revelation 1:16)

Today, we’re looking at *“His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.”* We also want to be sure and review all seven of the seven-fold personage of Christ because we have broken them up over four lessons. We’ll look at them all together and then look at John’s reaction. It was important first, however, that we looked over each one to see what they meant!

So, what is a *“countenance”*?

Countenance [koun-tn-uh ns] noun

1. appearance, especially the look or expression of the face: a sad countenance.
2. the face; visage.

As you can see from the definition, *countenance* is describing the face. So, we see that the face of this man was shining like the sun. Can you think of a place in Scripture where the face of Christ was shining before?

Did you think of Mount Transfiguration? The book of Matthew tells us that as Jesus was transfigured *“His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment as white as the light”*. Another one you might think of is the Light that appeared to Paul? As Paul tells the story in Acts 26, he says, *“A light from heaven above the brightness of the sun”* No wonder Paul was blinded by that!!

There are a few things that we can put together here. In your mind, think of the original creation. What was the first thing God created? Light. Now when was the sun created? Day 4!! How was there light without the sun? Jesus was the *“beginning of the creation of God”* and the first thing God created was light. Beginning and first are the same thing! It’s because Jesus IS the LIGHT. Brother Branham said of the stars *“They were just reflecting the Light of One perfect Light. And there He was, the perfect Light of God, beginning of the creation of God.”*¹ Revelation 21:23 says, *“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”* We won’t NEED a sun in the New Jerusalem because Jesus will be there! As Brother Branham said:

We can see today that this countenance as the sun is yet another identification of Who Jesus truly is.

John’s Reaction

“And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” (Revelation 1:17,18)

Let's go back and review all seven personages of Christ

- 1) *Hair White as Snow (as wool)*
- 2) *Eyes of Fire*
- 3) *Feet as Brass*
- 4) *Voice as the Sound of Many Waters*
- 5) *Right hand were seven stars*
- 6) *Two-Edged Sword out of the mouth*
- 7) *Face as the sun*

Now, you know what all of these mean individually, but take them together as a picture. Imagine you are John and you are looking at this Person standing there. Go through the list and create an image of this Person. White hair, fiery eyes, feet of brass, and face shining like the sun! Consider the other attributes! My, what a picture! No wonder John says he "*fell at his feet as dead*"! Can you imagine such a vision?

Finally, we see that Christ is the Victorious One, the One Who conquered death. Think of all the super heroes, military leaders, powerful men and women throughout all history. Which one conquered death? Only Christ! He conquered what NO ONE has ever conquered!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 61 – 65

Questions

- 1) Who arises with healing in His wings? _____
- 2) There is no conqueror before Him and _____.
- 3) I have not come to bring fear and failure, _____.
- 4) Is it night or day during the church ages? _____
- 5) The only light they have _____.

Memorize: *"Every true believer is in the hand of God and can draw from His love and power, and receive the full benefit of all that God is to the believer. What God gives the messenger, and how He blesses and uses the messenger, is an example to all believers of His goodness and care to ALL members of His body."*

¹ 61-0108 para 130

Congratulations! You finished Chapter 2!

Lesson 16 - Ephesus: Introduction to the Church Ages

One of the purposes we have for this study is to understand WHY we believe what we believe. Perhaps you have asked yourself at times:

Why do we believe different than denominations?

Why do we believe in a messenger?

Why do we believe in Church Ages and not just actual churches in Asia.

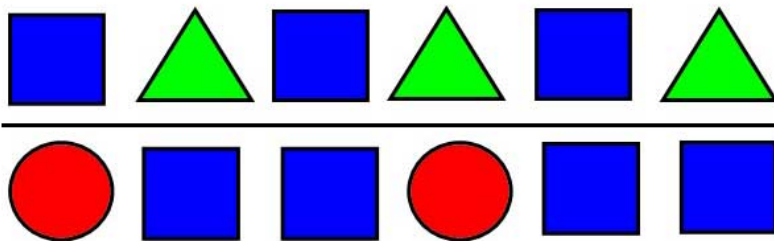
Brother Branham explains to us in this lesson the principles he used in determining these things. While we certainly esteem Brother Branham and his ministry, even he tells us that all things must come by the Word. Paul tells us in Galatians 1:8 *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”* So, all that we believe must come through the Word and line up with what Paul preached.

Have you noticed as you’ve read the Church Age Book thus far how often Brother Branham is quoting Scripture? It is because Scripture is what he has founded his belief and understanding on. It is the revelation of these Scriptures that we can see in this day because of Brother Branham’s ministry. Then, we can see how plain it is to understand, and how Brother Branham agrees with the Word and even with history!

Today Brother Branham will tell us the Scriptural pattern that God showed him through the Word.

Patterns

I’m sure that as a young child in Math class you were presented with something like this:



Fill in the shape and color that comes next!

This is a pattern. We find that God uses patterns and because God does everything right the first time He doesn’t ever change. We may try two or three things before we decide which one we like best, but God knows what is best and does it the best way the first time. He does not change! (Hebrews 13:8) He has no need to change. Brother Branham refers to this (God does not change) as the *“Keystone of the Bible”*. The keystone is the most important stone in a Roman arch. It is the one that supports all the other stones.

So, once we can identify a pattern in Scripture we know God will always use that pattern. We see God using prophets to speak to His people, He continues to use that pattern today. (refer to Amos 3:7)

So, through prayer and study God revealed to Brother Branham the unchanging pattern that He was using.

Pentecost is the TRUE CHURCH

When we look in Scripture we find the first New Testament church was the church in Acts 2. This church was Pentecostal by experience. The day of Pentecost came and God poured out His Holy Spirit. Thus, God set a pattern here. Every true church in the future would be the same as this one. God does not change! So, if we find a church that calls itself a church, but doesn't have the characteristics they had on the day of Pentecost, what must that be? A false church. So, we can see through history a pattern of a TRUE church and a FALSE church. We will definitely talk about the differences between a true and false church in the coming lessons.

This pattern will identify the true church through each age for us. If we can identify scripturally the first messenger we will also see the pattern for how to identify the angel/messenger to each age. This will be our next lesson.

The False Vine and the True Vine

In your assignment today is the reading of Matthew 13:24-43, which is the parable of the wheat and tares. This also is a pattern that we see in Scripture. There is a true/good seed and a false seed. They both look SO CLOSE! Thank God, the elect CANNOT be deceived.



WHEAT: before it is fully ripe.

TARES: Lolium Temulentum

We need to be sure that we see the pattern of this story.

Both the wheat and the tares worship God when it rains. They both ACT the same to some extent, but one will bear the true fruit and one will not. Merely being "*religious*" and the act of worshipping God are not the markers of a true church, though the true church will do that. The pattern of the true church is MORE than religiousness and worshipping God.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 66 - 72, Matt 13:24-43

Questions

- 1) What revelation is the Keystone of the Bible? _____
- 2) An Unchanging God with _____.
- 3) Thus what the church was at Pentecost is the Standard. That is the _____.
- 4) The True Church of today will try to _____.
- 5) The Laodicean Age will have a complete blackout of what? _____
- 6) What will the false vine try to do to the true vine? Will that ever change? _____

- 7) Did Cain worship God? _____
- 8) What truths did Brother Branham say we should never forget? _____

Memorize: "Yes, it is Jesus ALONE Who walks in the midst of the churches. It is God in her, willing and doing of His good pleasure. Never forget that. You have only one relationship to God and God has only one relationship to you — that is JESUS, and JESUS ALONE."

Lesson 17 - Ephesus: The Messenger and the City

Who was the messenger to the first church? How do we know?

This one is *EASY!!* The Bible tells us this very directly. It was Paul. Paul says: *“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:*

The Bible plainly tells us that Paul was the apostle to the gentiles. He was the one who impacted the first church age for Christ. There are plenty of other Scriptures Brother Branham will use in today’s reading that will also show why and how Paul was the messenger to the first Church Age.

Patterns:

Remember the pattern that we talked about in the last lesson? This principle is applied in identifying the upcoming messengers as well. The Bible makes it easy for us to identify the first messenger, Paul. How then using this principle would we identify future messengers? Since Paul is identified for us, now we look for what he did, how he acted, and how God used him to show us how the future messengers will act.

Brother Branham identifies for us a few key points in Paul’s life and ministry.

- 1) Paul was absolutely true to the Word
- 2) His ministry was in the power of the Spirit
- 3) He had the evident fruit of his God given ministry.

Paul had revelation from God for his ministry. He did NOT wait for MAN to tell him where to go and what to preach. This point is going to be VERY important in the future lessons on the future messengers.

The signs and wonders followed Paul. The dead were raised, the lame were made to walk, and all kinds of sicknesses were healed. Paul said *“the signs of an apostle were wrought among you”*¹

Not only were signs and wonders a marker of the ministry of Paul, but his labors bore the fruit of the prime goal of ministry as well, the salvation of souls. No other ministry of that day brought the true fruit of repentance and faith in Christ such as Paul’s. Other ministries of the day even *copied* Paul, for various reasons.²

And so we see a threefold pattern that is Scripturally identified for us to follow. The Bible doesn’t tell us who the second messenger through the seventh messengers are, but praise God, now we know what pattern to look for!

The City Of Ephesus



As we have learned so far, the reason these seven churches were chosen was because of the characteristics they had.

What was the characteristics of Ephesus? As the first church, they aimed very high, but as time went on they began to get relaxed.

The religion of Ephesus types itself out distinctly in this Church Age. The city of Ephesus worshipped the goddess Diana. This was an idol that did not have much shape, but it had two iron arms.

No shape meant it looked very innocent and was hard to identify. These iron arms represented the intent to crush the works of God. We will talk in future lessons about the "*deeds of the Nicolaitanes*". As you read your assignment today, pay close attention to bottom of page 77 and 78/83 p44-47. Brother Branham describes the types of the temple worship of Diana; finally ending in the laity being enslaved.

Who are the laity? How are they enslaved? This will become a major topic of discussion in future lessons. We will soon study the Nicolaitanes.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 72 – 78

Questions

- 1) List the three cities that were called the first three cities of the Christian faith in order.

- 2) Paul planted the church in Ephesus. Who did he leave in charge after he left? _____
- 3) Ephesus' compound meaning is: _____
- 4) For a while the church of Ephesus prevailed. What did they do that allowed Satan in? _____

- 5) Satan was loosed in the midst of the people, yet why did he "take no shape"? _____

- 6) People who claim to know God apart from the Word are: _____
- 7) Would you like to be in a church where "thus saith the Holy Ghost" is no longer a living reality, but the church is under the leadership of man? _____

- 8) What kind of church would that be? _____
- 9) What would it look like today? _____

¹ II Corinthians 12:12.

² Philippians 1:16

Memorize: "Yes, it is Jesus ALONE Who walks in the midst of the churches. It is God in her, willing and doing of His good pleasure. Never forget that. You have only one relationship to God and God has only one relationship to you — that is JESUS, and JESUS ALONE."

Lesson 18 - Ephesus: The one who walks in the midst of the candlesticks.

Let's start with a little recap out of Revelation chapter 1 today, shall we? How many candlesticks were there? What did they represent? What were they made out of? Who walked in the midst of them? Don't forget this book of Revelation is a book of symbols. Each picture we see has *meaning*.

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. (Revelation 1:20)

So, the candlesticks represent the churches. They are GOLDEN candlesticks. Hopefully you remember the lesson we had on what a candlestick was. These candlesticks didn't hold actual wax candles. They were oil lamps, all drawing from the same source of oil. Do you know what an oil lamp is? They are on almost every table at your local Cracker Barrel restaurant! A wick dips down into the oil and saturates the wick. The oil in the wick burns more than the wick itself.

So, these candlesticks are fueled by the oil of the Holy Spirit. They are also golden. What does gold represent? Purity! God's church is without spot or wrinkle! He sees her as pure. Gold goes through a process to be pure though – the gold is beaten to get all the impurities out. Sure, we have trials and tests – but they only refine us and make us pure for Christ!

Finally we know it was Jesus ALONE that was walking in the midst of the candlesticks. The messengers are represented there as the stars in His hand, but He is there alone. Jesus didn't need anyone else to save you!! He did it ALONE.

Jesus, walking in the midst of His churches in the last days. Stop and think for a moment, what does this mean to you?

Hopefully you are encouraged by that thought! Through it all, Jesus is there. We can look back and think "Wow, the believers in the first church age were so awesome – I wish I could have seen how God worked in their midst!" You don't have to do that though! Not only did Jesus walk with the church in the first age, He walks in the church today. He is here with us NOW. Brother Branham tells us not to look back to those times, but to look UP to Christ.

Christ Praises His Own:

Hey, do you want to know something? You're AWESOME!! I mean, you're reading the Church Age Book! You're really getting your head and heart into the Word!

It feels pretty good to hear that, doesn't it? This is what Christ begins to tell John to write to the first church. He tells them they're doing a great



job in some things. God always encourages us to do the right things and discourages us from the wrong. He's a really great Father! When you fall and get discouraged, don't stay down. God doesn't forget the good things you've done too. Just repent and come back to Him!

Persecutions:

"I know thy works, thy labor, and thy patience."

In the early church they worked hard at being Christians. It was a trial that took patience. There were persecutions abundant. They were a small little group of believers facing a whole world that didn't understand Christ.

God's people will ALWAYS be persecuted.

"But I don't feel very persecuted today!", is what you might say to that. Well, perhaps you don't suffer persecutions at the end of a sword. Perhaps you aren't kicked out of your home like Aquila and Priscilla were, but because you live your life with the standards of holiness, you are persecuted. Maybe no one ever says a word to you, but have you ever struggled with living a holy life? Why? Because it isn't cool to be holy. You see? You are persecuted in your life just because of the perceptions around you. It may not be a physical trial, but it is a trial and takes Godly patience to bear. Keep laboring in holiness!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 78 – 83

Questions

- 1) Why is Jesus ALONE as He walks among the candle sticks? _____
- 2) How do you have a relationship with God? Is there any other way? _____

- 3) The seven messengers are making _____.
- 4) What three things is Jesus standing there expressing? _____

- 5) Without Christ the church is simply what? _____
- 6) The word *labour* signifies? _____
- 7) Because the spirit of the world can't overcome the Spirit of the Lord, what does it try to do? _____

- 8) What was holiness to the early church? _____

Memorize: *"Yes, it is Jesus ALONE Who walks in the midst of the churches. It is God in her, willing and doing of His good pleasure. Never forget that. You have only one relationship to God and God has only one relationship to you — that is JESUS, and JESUS ALONE."*

Lesson 19 - Ephesus: Christ Praises His Own (continued).

One of the things that Jesus was telling John about the first church was how well they identified false apostles. Think about this for a few moments. There are false apostles that need to be identified in the first church! That means there were false doctrines in the first church! These weren't men that were evil, or atheists – they were so-called “*Christians*”. That meant they looked the same as the rest of the church.

In the New Testament many warnings went out about this. Consider Paul's “*grievous wolves*” in Acts 20:29. Also, think of Jude, verses 3 and 4, in which Jude is telling us to contend for the ORIGINAL faith and to watch for “*certain men crept in unawares*”.



So, Jesus is praising the first church for how they knew to identify a wolf in sheep's clothing. First, they recognized, as Paul did, that God doesn't change, and He doesn't give multiple revelations to multiple people. They knew the revelation God gave to Paul was the only revelation. Once they recognized this fact, if someone started speaking and it didn't agree with what Paul said, they knew they were false.

Another way to identify false prophets is to look at what they point you to. If they point you to what THEY are saying, whether it agrees with the Word or not – you better watch out!! A TRUE apostle will always point you to the WORD.

Isn't it amazing how quickly this begins? The devil wasted no time in trying to deceive the true church. Within 30 years after the day of Pentecost, Paul and Jude are proclaiming cautions against false doctrine! This is nothing new, it is how the devil has operated from the Garden of Eden. How was Eve deceived? She was deceived by one Word being misplaced. Not a big explanation and story, but just a slight change. It looked like wool, but it had sharp teeth!!

Brother Branham tells us very strongly in our reading in this lesson to STAY WITH THE WORD. Don't let down on it. Not ever.

The Name of Christ

Remember in the last lesson, how we talked about persecutions? One of the biggest things you will ever be persecuted for is the NAME of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is that NAME that is offensive to people. It is this Name that identifies Who our ONE GOD is.

Imagine that time period of the first church. There was so much idolatry, so many gods for every little thing, and here comes Paul saying, “No, there is one God, He died for you, and His name is Jesus”. How funny that must have sounded to these believers in many gods! Finally, in Antioch, the group of people that follow the way Paul is preaching, are identified by that NAME – they are called Christians! There is definitely a power in the NAME!

Think of it; we are baptized in that Name, we pray in that Name, we serve someone a cup of coffee in that Name. ALL that we do, we do in the Name of Jesus¹, to the point that if we feel we CAN'T do something in that NAME – We don't do it at all.

So, those false apostle wolves in sheep's clothing were coming in and trying to get people to get away from that Name. To get away from Jesus ALONE. They wanted to add works and other things, but Jesus commended that first church because they labored specifically for HIS NAME's sake. It wasn't just that they had done good things and endured persecutions patiently, but because they had done it because of HIS NAME.

There is power in His Name. Remember the story Brother Branham tells about the table hanging in the air? He couldn't get it to fall to the floor in ANY name, not in Father, Son, Holy Ghost, not in the name of a holy church – only in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ was there power! Healing is in the Name of Jesus. Power is in the name of Jesus. It's at the NAME of Jesus that every knee shall bow!²

Finally, we should look at the fact that we BEAR the Name of Christ. Because you are called a CHRISTIAN, you bear His Name. What an honor! What a privilege! You can be called by the Name of God Himself. You can bear the Name of the one who died for the sins of the whole world! The Ephesian church knew this was more than a religious label though. They knew there was a responsibility that went with that. Because they took His Name, they were to depart from sin.³ They knew from the original 10 commandments, this was not something to do in vain.⁴

How about you? How do YOU bear the Name of Christ?

Assignment: Reading: Pages 83 - 87

Questions

- 1) How did the Ephesians identify false prophets? _____
- 2) What will the false prophets be saying to you in the last days? _____
- 3) What will the true prophet be saying to you in the last days? _____
- 4) (True/False) Since the Ephesian Church Age was so close to the time of Christ, they fully held on to the Word. _____
- 5) What happens when the church lets down on the Word? _____

- 6) Whosoever nameth the name of the Lord, let him _____.
- 7) CHRISTIANS bear the name of _____.
- 8) Who or what weren't the Christians working for? _____
- 9) If they could not act in that name, what did they do? _____

¹ Col 3:17

² Philippians 2:10

³ II Timothy 2:19

⁴ Exodus 20:7

Memorize: *“Yes, it is Jesus ALONE Who walks in the midst of the churches. It is God in her, willing and doing of His good pleasure. Never forget that. You have only one relationship to God and God has only one relationship to you — that is JESUS, and JESUS ALONE.”*

Lesson 20 - Ephesus: God's complaint and warning to Ephesus

Left their first love

When you were born, was there anyone sweeter to you than your parents? No one could care for you, or love you like they could. As you grew up, your mother would bake special treats just for you – your heart would feel so warm! When your father got home from work, you'd rush out the door to give him a big welcome home hug. Maybe your family would play games together, sing, and have devotions. What a warm household so many of us had!

Then you start getting older. Perhaps you look at your family and they aren't as "cool" as you used to think they were. You begin to withdraw from them more and more. Your father gets a grunt instead of a welcome home hug. You argue with your mother more than you tell her you love her.

Finally, you get up and just leave. You find a new family. Maybe it is friends, work associates, or even someone else's parents that you decided are better.

WHAT HAPPENED?

God's complaint to the church of Ephesus was that they left their first love. Like this little scenario the church started out filled with the Holy Ghost. They started out being excited by the things that God was doing. They would run to God with their troubles and with the things that made them excited. They would praise Him, talk to Him, walk with Him – everything they did was about Him.

As time went on, that "cool factor" came into play for the church as well. They suddenly started caring about what the world thought of them. They started realizing they didn't have the best homes, the best clothes, or the "best people" they could find. They started getting formal; they started doing things they thought the world would like. Oh, they had good intentions; they wanted to attract the worldly people, right? Oh sure, let's look a certain way so that others who like that look will come in, and we'll get them to Christ. Except that never works, because you left Christ to do that in the first place!

Now I hope that you haven't left your first love in your family. I hope you still cherish your parents and family the way you did when you were very young. Can you imagine the hurt that parents would face if you said "Mom, Dad, I'm going over to stay at Johnny's house from now on. His parents are going to be my parents, not you guys anymore"? Oh my! How hurtful that would be. Put yourself in their shoes. Let someone you love tell you "I don't want you anymore." This is a very sad and hurtful thing. We should never do that!

This is what the Church of Ephesus was doing to Christ. They left that loving attitude for Christ and tried to "improve things" so they could look better to the outside world. They essentially told Christ, "We love You, but we're going to leave and do something better." How painful that must be to God!

How about you? Have you left your first love? In the message *"The Seven Church Ages"* (54-0412) Brother Branham gives us a little test:

*"Is your Christian experiences... When was it the dearest to you?"
You ought to be able to say, "Right now!"*

How is your Christian experience? Are you as in love with Christ as you've ever been? If not, this is what he says:

*"Well, my best experience was back when I first got the baptism of the Holy Spirit, when I come."
Just say, "Oh, brother, you've fallen from grace." That's right. Look,*

Don't leave your first love. Your experience with Christ should be as warm and rich now as it ever has been. You should still have that feeling for Christ as you did when your mother made you those special cookies and you felt warm and good inside. You should still feel that way about your mother too!

The Warning of God – Strong Church Gone!

After noting that the Ephesian Church had left her first love, God called on them to remember where they came from. He asked them to remember how they felt on Pentecost, how the Spirit worked through them, how they had nothing but God's provision.

After they remembered, they could compare it to where they were currently and repent. God gave them a strong warning that if they did not repent, God would take away their candlestick. Brother Branham tells us this would be the messenger and the faithful shepherds that were taken away.

Finally, he notes that Ephesus, which was the strong church Paul wrote to, had no Christians left at its end. All because they allowed little things to come in and they left that first love they had.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 88 - 91

Questions

- 1) What does it mean that “*God has no grandchildren*”? _____

- 2) The _____ to please God, the _____ to know His Word,
the _____ for reaching out in the Spirit all begins to fade...
- 3) *Challenge/Application:* Have the answers to question #2 began in your life, and if so, have they begun to fade? _____

- 4) They put in a choir instead of _____.
- 5) Who/What creeps in and says “*How can we protect this truth we have? What can we do to see this revival goes on?*” _____
- 6) Do you think it is important today to remember Pentecost? Why? _____

- 7) What does *bereft* mean? _____

- 8) How many Christians were in Ephesus at its end? _____

Memorize: “*Yes, it is Jesus ALONE Who walks in the midst of the churches. It is God in her, willing and doing of His good pleasure. Never forget that. You have only one relationship to God and God has only one relationship to you — that is JESUS, and JESUS ALONE.*”

Lesson 21 - Ephesus: Nicolaitanism

Caramel Nicolaitan?

"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."

Revelation 2:6

I know what you're thinking...What is a *Nicolaitan*? It sounds like something you get at a fancy coffee shop. "Yes, I'd like a grande caramel nicolaitan with extra whip please!" However, they didn't have coffee shops back in the first church age; that is a more recent phenomenon.

So, what is a Nicolaitan?

The word Nicolaitan comes from two Greek words. *Nikao* which means "to conquer" and *Laos* which means "the laity". The laity are the people in the church. So putting this all together, it means "conquer the laity" or perhaps more plainly "to become ruler over the people in the church".

Now, it was speculated that the Nicolaitans were a group of riotous sinners, but Revelation 2 tells us that the Ephesian church could not "bear them which are evil", but all it said of the Nicolaitans was that they hated their deeds. There is a distinct difference here. The evil ones they threw out, but they just hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans.

So, the Nicolaitans were subtly doing things that attempted to remove the Holy Ghost from the leadership and install men as the leaders. It probably looked so good. Some fine, holy, righteous and good man rose up and people likely said "He sure is a fine guy to follow. Everyone ought to do what he says". That might seem like a good idea, but we must be careful to follow the "leadership of the Holy Ghost coming through the Word"¹

Rules or Love?

Now, let's leave that for just a moment and talk about rules. No one likes rules right? Do you like them? Get up at such and such a time, brush your teeth before bed, make your bed, don't hit your siblings, be respectful, stand up, sit down, blah blah blah and on and on!! Rules are so restricting right? Sure, somewhere deep down we know rules are technically good for us, but really, do you like having all these rules?

Did you know God intended us to be led by the Holy Spirit and signs and wonders, and that it was MAN that cried out for a law? Yes! It was man that said "Give us rules to follow". Do you remember how we talked about "Left our first love" in the last lesson? You see, with love, you really don't need rules. If you do everything God requires because you LOVE Him, then there are no rules or "law". You are living under GRACE and LOVE. This is ultimately how God wants us to live; to be in love with Him. It's all about our relationship. It was NEVER about doing the right things just because God said so. IT IS about love. "If ye love me, keep my commandments"²

Rules and Nicolaitans

So, just as the Children of Israel who instead of following the Supernatural, cried out for a law and received the 10 commandments, so in the first church age people began to leave the Supernatural signs and wonders of Pentecost and began to follow the laws of man. The Apostle Paul was constantly warning the church about “*commandments of men*”³ and how bad “*they of the circumcision*”³ (who wanted new converts to follow the old Jewish laws) were.

Eventually, it got to a place where men were lifted up, almost like Aaron’s priesthood in the Old Testament. Imagine, just 30-50 years after the crucifixion of Christ, which abolished and fulfilled the old system of priesthood, now Christians were trying to go back to that. Jesus poured out the Holy Ghost on ALL flesh, but these Nicolaitans were trying to say that it was only certain men that had any ability to do any of the worship.

God wants us ALL to participate in worship. He sends gifts and callings to every believer. He poured Himself out as the Holy Ghost on all His children and wants them to use those gifts. He wants ALL to be a part, not just one man in a leadership role. This doesn’t mean we don’t have leaders, but that those leaders are fulfilling there God given role and everyone else should fulfill theirs too!

God wants YOU to love, serve, and worship Him. He doesn’t want you to sit like a bump on a log and do only what some man tells you to. YOU can have a relationship with HIM. He’s given YOU His Word and His Spirit, He wants YOU to follow HIM.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 91 - 96

Questions

- 1) What are the two Greek words that make up Nicolaitan? _____

- 2) What does *Nicolaitan* mean? _____

- 3) The false vine is _____.
- 4) "I believe in the leadership of the Holy Ghost coming through _____."
- 5) The false vine was teaching that rulership _____.
- 6) What does organization do to people? _____
- 7) They make it impossible for the laity to worship God unless _____

- 8) Challenge/Application: Luther came out of Catholicism. After he died the people organized again. Do you think that people may try to do the same thing today after our messenger has passed?

¹ CAB page 93/100 p111

² John 14:15

³ Titus 1:14, Matt 15:9 (Jesus) Titus 1;10, Galatians 2:4

Memorize: "Yes, it is Jesus ALONE Who walks in the midst of the churches. It is God in her, willing and doing of His good pleasure. Never forget that. You have only one relationship to God and God has only one relationship to you — that is JESUS, and JESUS ALONE."

Lesson 22 - Ephesus: The Reward: Tree of Life

Voice of The Spirit

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:6

Today we begin the close of the Ephesian Church Age. Each age will close in the same way “*He that hath an ear*”. This is kind of a funny statement isn’t it? Who DOESN’T have an ear? Barring some tragic accident, or some kind of deformity, everyone has an ear. So, everyone SHOULD hear this, but not all will. There are even those who HEAR but are unable to RECEIVE. This is what the verse is saying, if you can hear and receive this, then here is what I have for you.

Overcomers

In order to receive the reward, we must overcome. How do we overcome? What does it mean to be an overcomer? Brother Branham says this about overcoming:

“So many says, ‘If the Lord will take this evil spirit from me, from drinking, or from gambling, or from lying, or stealing, I’ll serve Him.’

*But that’s up to you. See, you got to do something, too. ‘They that overcome shall inherit all things.’ They that overcome. **You have power to do it, but you must be willing to lay it down.** See? ‘She has made Herself ready.’ I like that Word.*

You see, God could not push us through a little pipe, pull us out on the other end, and then saying, ‘Blessed is he that overcometh.’ You had nothing to overcome; He just pushed you through. But you’ve got to make decisions for yourself. I have to make decisions for myself. In doing that, we show our faith and respects to God.”

(62-0121E - The Marriage of the Lamb)

There are many things in life that we must overcome. There are many things we must be “*willing to lay down*”. God will not drive a bulldozer through your life, cleaning everything out all the time, He’s looking for you to overcome. He’s looking for you to rise up and make decisions to show Him how much you love Him. Will you be perfect in all of that? Most assuredly not, but it’s HIS BLOOD that perfects us, not our own works. God is only asking us to make the decision, to lay down the things of this world.

So, God is granting this reward, to the overcomer in the early church, and to you, the overcomer in this age. What is that reward? To eat of the Tree of Life!

Tree of Life

What is this Tree of Life? Let's take a moment and look at the three Scriptures in Genesis and the three Scriptures in Revelation that talk about it. Isn't that a neat little fact?

Genesis 2:9, 3:22, 3:24

Revelation 2:7, 22:2, 22:14

Now, what was this Tree of Life? Simply put, this tree was Jesus. Adam and Eve were supposed to eat only of the fruit of the Tree of Life, but not of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Because they sinned and ate of the fruit of the wrong tree, what happened? They were cast out of the Garden of Eden, and God set up a cherubim with a flaming sword to guard the way of the Tree of Life. ¹

Now, let's put these things together. The one thing that is notably taken away after the fall is the Tree of Life. They can no longer eat of that fruit. They no longer have that fellowship with Christ. Here in the Ephesian Church Age, what is the reward? To eat of the Tree of Life.

Brother Branham said "*The flaming sword of the guarding cherubim has been sheathed*". So, because of the death of Christ on the Cross, we now can eat of the Tree of Life again. God has a reason for this. God wants us to EXPRESS His Words. How do we do this? By the Spirit of Christ we can overcome. We can overcome because HE gives us overcoming power. We do the work of yielding to Christ and He enables us to willingly lay things down.

What was once taken from Adam because of the fall, has been restored to the overcomer through Christ!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 96 - 109

Questions

- 1) Will everyone who hears Brother Branham teach the truth catch the revelation? _____

- 2) Why should we watch the Ephesian Church Age carefully? _____

- 3) Trees throughout Scriptures refer to _____.
- 4) The Tree of Life refers to _____.
- 5) The Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil refers to _____.
- 6) (True/False) Satan has creative powers. _____
- 7) Was the fall of man part of God's predestinated plan? _____
- 8) (True/False) Adam was the father of all living. _____
- 9) For the overcomer, where is the flaming sword that guards the approach to the tree of life? _____

- 10) God's intention for His creation, man, is to _____.

¹ Genesis 3:24

Memorize: *"Yes, it is Jesus ALONE Who walks in the midst of the churches. It is God in her, willing and doing of His good pleasure. Never forget that. You have only one relationship to God and God has only one relationship to you — that is JESUS, and JESUS ALONE."*

YOU FINISHED CHAPTER 3! – You deserve a Caramel ~~Nicolaitan~~ Frappacino!

Lesson 23 – Smyrna: The Messenger and the City

Who was the messenger to the Smyranean church? How do we know?

Let's think back to what we learned about patterns. Remember, when God makes a decision, He doesn't change it. So what God had in Paul as the first church age messenger, we will see in the second messenger.

Patterns:

Remember the pattern that we talked about in the last lesson? This principle is applied in identifying the messengers as well. The Bible makes it easy for us to identify the first messenger, Paul. Earlier, we found a few key points in Paul's life and ministry.

- 4) He was absolutely true to the Word.
- 5) His ministry was in the power of the Spirit.
- 6) He had the evident fruit of his God given ministry.



Statue of Irenaeus

So, Brother Branham, in reading the histories of the early church through books like *The Nicene Fathers*, *Eusebius*, and other such works, looked for those characteristics to be found in one man during this time period. He found two men that would fit, Polycarp and Irenaeus.

Polycarp seemed like he would have been the right man. He was even bishop of the church in Smyrna. He was a fine example of a Christian believer and was even a student of Saint John himself. Irenaeus was a student of Polycarp's. He too was a wonderful example of a Christian man. He became a bishop in what is now Lyon, France. So, Brother Branham had two men who would clearly be qualified, how did he choose only one?

“THUS BY READING HISTORY WE CAN FIND OUT WHAT MAN OR MEN IN THE VARIOUS AGES WERE THE CLOSEST TO GOD'S ORIGINAL PATTERN, THE APOSTLE PAUL. THE ONES THAT GOD USED TO BRING HIS PEOPLE BACK TO THE WORD OF TRUTH WOULD BE THE ONES TO EXAMINE. THEN OUT OF THOSE THERE WOULD BE ONE FOR EVERY AGE WHO WOULD STAND OUT THE CLEAREST AS THE CLOSEST IN WORD PATTERN AND POWER. THAT ONE WOULD BE THE MESSENGER.”

Brother Branham selected Irenaeus over Polycarp because Polycarp leaned more toward organization than Irenaeus did. Irenaeus repeatedly challenged the church at Rome when he felt they were straying from the Word. Brother Branham knew that Nicolaitanism was wrong and saw evidences of it in Polycarp, but not in Irenaeus. Thus, he selected Irenaeus.

The City Of Smyrna

As we have learned so far, the reason these seven churches were chosen was because of the characteristics they had.

What was the characteristics of Smyrna? Smyrna was known for its chief export of Myrrh. Myrrh was a bitter herb used in embalming the dead. You can even hear the word Myrrh in Smyrna. Smyrna was taken from that word. So, Smyrna means “bitter”.

As we’ll read in the portion of Revelation 2 that applies to this church age, God exhorts the Smyrnan believers to “*be thou faithful unto death*”. There we find Myrrh yet again. An embalming for the dead.

Truly, the characteristics of these cities is why God chose them. The characteristics of the city matched the corresponding age!



Ruins of the Agora (open market area) of Smyrna

Assignment: Reading: Pages 110 – 115

Questions

- 1) How do we determine the men who were closest to God’s Original Pattern? _____

- 2) Who was the messenger to the Smyrnan Church Age? _____
- 3) Who did Polycarp spend 2 hours praying for before he died? _____
- 4) Irenaeus was militant against what? _____
- 5) “Thus with his strict adherence to _____, his wonderful _____, and the attendance of the _____ upon that ministry, he is the right choice for the age.”
- 6) “The word Smyrna means _____ being derived from the word, _____.”
- 7) No true believer is any stronger and spiritually healthy and alive than _____

- 8) How does God introduce himself to each age? _____

Memorize: “If you are a Christian, you will get back to what the Spirit is teaching, that is, the Word of this age. Every messenger to every age will preach that Word. Every fresh and true revival will be because men have gotten back to the Word for their age.”

Lesson 24 – Smyrna: The Conditions of the Age

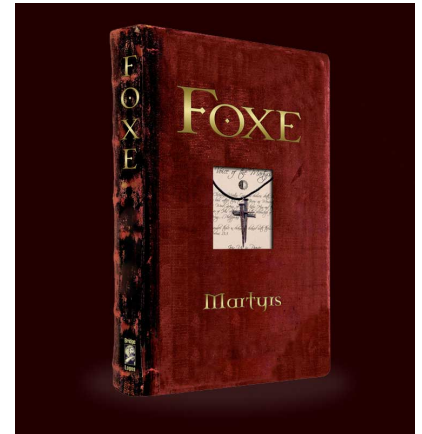
I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) (Revelation 2:9a)

Brother Branham starts this section of the book, telling us the key to this age is tribulation. What exactly is tribulation?

tribulation (noun)

grievous trouble; severe trial or suffering.

So, this is different than getting teased because you have long hair. It is different than being the brunt of jokes, just because you aren't like worldly people. No, these Christians were being TORTURED for their faith. They were not merely being thrown to lions and killed, but they were being coerced into giving up their faith and worshipping idols on threat of a lot of pain. They were beaten, stretched until their joints were dislocated, whipped, poked with hot pincers, and a whole host of other things. Then, finally, if they wouldn't give up, they were killed by lions, gladiators, fire, or any other number of awful things.



We can read many of these histories of martyrs, those that were tortured and killed for their faith, out of the book *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, by John Foxe. *This is an important book of the history of the Christian Church.* Incidentally, Brother Branham wanted it for a Christmas present one year. He finally got it at some point! It would be a good idea to plan on reading this book at some time throughout your high school years. I'll warn you though, it isn't a "flowery bed of ease" kind of a book to read. Still, it is because of this book we can really understand what the believers in the Smyrnan Church Age were going through.

"I think the greatest thing that Paul wanted, when he said, "My time is up now," the greatest desire of Paul's heart was to be a martyr. That was the desire of all their hearts in them days. If they... Did you ever read the Foxe's Book Of The Martyrs, and also read also The Nicene Council? The greatest honor that could be, when different ones (and Polycarp and them) walked into the lions' den, they shouted with joy. Walked in there knowing that they was going to be a martyr. When they was burnt to the stake, they screamed with joy, for the honor of being a martyr. "

(62-0809 Present Stage of my Ministry)

How about you? What is YOUR reaction to persecution and trials, because of your faith? Do you shout for joy? These Smyrnan believers were CONVINCED that JESUS WAS GOD, or they never would have suffered through the tribulations they had without giving up. Once, a Christian named Ignatius was captured and being transported to Rome. Appropriately to our topic, on their way they stopped in Smyrna. While there, he wrote to the Church in Rome not to try to deliver him from martyrdom. In short, not to try and save his life! He wrote:

NOW I BEGIN TO BE A DISCIPLE. I CARE NOTHING OF VISIBLE OR INVISIBLE THINGS SO THAT I MAY BUT WIN CHRIST. LET FIRE AND THE CROSS, LET THE COMPANIES OF WILD BEASTS, LET BREAKING OF BONES AND TEARING OF LIMBS, LET THE GRINDING OF THE WHOLE BODY, AND ALL THE MALICE OF THE DEVIL, COME UPON ME; BE IT SO, ONLY MAY I WIN CHRIST JESUS.

IGNATIUS, A.D. 110 – FOXE’S BOOK OF MARTYRS

Wow! These early Christians really cared for nothing, but Christ!! What a lesson that can be to us. What kinds of things do we care for? So many times we get upset when our sibling takes something we wanted, or gets to do something we can’t, and we get angry. It can be so easy to be blinded by our privileges and our stuff. These Christians didn’t care about stuff like that, they couldn’t - all their possessions were stolen from them long ago anyway! If all we have left is Christ, we realize He is enough!

Tribulations Today.

Ignatius said *“be it so, only may I win Christ Jesus”*

How about you? Is this YOUR desire? “I don’t care what happens, just let me win Christ Jesus?”

So what are your persecutions and tribulations? List them below:

Yeah, I didn’t think you’d list too many. But let’s consider what OUR trials are today. We no longer live in an age where you are forced to be tortured and die for Jesus Christ...or do we? There are no guys with whips, racks, or other deadly devices staring you in the face. However, when you wake up each morning, make no mistake, you have two options, do I forsake my own life and win Christ or do I go along with the world? Do I allow my heart to be filled with anger, bitterness, jealousy, covetousness or pride? These are the continuous *“torture”* devices of today. It is much easier to recant on Jesus Christ and allow ourselves to be jealous or to covet someone else’s things or opportunities, it is much harder to take the way with the Lord’s despised few and deny ourselves of those *“pleasures”*.

Will you rise up off your bed and say, let all these things come upon me, I will die to them, only let me WIN CHRIST?

...and Poverty (but thou art rich)

See how Christ mentions *“poverty”* in our Scripture today? (Revelation 2:9). These Christians were so abused that their money and possessions were taken from them. Brother Branham writes:

THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE NOT MATERIAL MINDED. THEY ARE CHRIST-MINDED. THEY DO NOT SEEK THE TREASURES THAT ARE BELOW; THEY SEEK THOSE ABOVE. (CAB PAGE 118/129 P33)

This lesson’s reading contains some of my favorite quotes of this book! *“Character is a Victory”*, *“You have to suffer to reign”*, *“Power apart from Character is satanic”* and *“Cloudy skies or bright skies are no indication of God’s love”*. Brother Branham really helps us understand what it’s all about, and why God gives us trials, in this lesson’s reading. Make sure you pay close attention!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 115 – 119

Questions

- 1) The key to this age is: _____
- 2) If you were kind to Christians in the Smyranean Age, what might happen to you? _____

- 3) Does love mean “no suffering”? Can you think of part of the “love passage” of Scripture where it mentions this? (I Corinthians 13) _____
- 4) The proof of God’s love is: _____
- 5) Christ learned obedience through the things that He _____.
- 6) Unless we suffer with Him we cannot _____.
- 7) (Yes/No) Does God want us to share His throne? _____
- 8) (True/False) Bright skies and still waters are signs of God’s love and approval. _____
- 9) How do we prove our love to Him? _____

_____.
- 10) The people of God are not _____-minded, they are _____-minded.
- 11) It is not with _____ that God works. He moves by _____.

Memorize: *“If you are a Christian, you will get back to what the Spirit is teaching, that is, the Word of this age. Every messenger to every age will preach that Word. Every fresh and true revival will be because men have gotten back to the Word for their age.”*

Lesson 25 - Smyrna: Satan has a synagogue?

“and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.” (Revelation 2:9b)

Synagogue: *assembly or gathering.*

Have you ever thought of Satan having a synagogue? Satan having a church? Satan having a gathering of people getting together to worship? Surely this sounds like a scary thing! I’m sure we all imagine a dimly lit place, spooky music, and hooded people trying to hide their identities.

This mental picture we have is nothing like what is being talked about in this verse.

Remember talking about the true vine and the false vine? Remember how they look SO CLOSE. Yes, Satan has a synagogue.

Satan has an assembly of his own believers, but they do not even know they are worshipping Satan. They “say *they are Jews*” but they really aren’t. They are just trying to LOOK prestigious. They LOOK like true believers but they are not.

This is their blasphemy! They aren’t blaspheming God, but they are blaspheming the church. They are making themselves LOOK like the true church but they aren’t. This deceives many people because it is hard for people to see what true worship of God really is.

How does one decide to become the synagogue of Satan?

No one really decides to do this. They start off with good intentions. Over time, things begin to break down and man tries to replace God’s programs with their own. In doing so, they end up changing the Word of God.

So, these early church people began to try to “*improve on God*”. They began to set up leaders to direct them. The deeds that had started in the first church age became doctrines. Men began to organize and divide based on these doctrines.



Smyrna means bitterness

Notice what Brother Branham says at the bottom of page 123/134 p58.

“NOTICE HOW ORGANIZATION BREEDS HATRED. IT DESTROYS FELLOWSHIP. IT MAKES BITTERNESS. THAT IS WHAT MYRRH MEANS. THIS IS WHAT SMYRNA WAS FULL OF. BITTERNESS. A ROOT OF BITTERNESS DEFILES MANY. SO MORE AND MORE DEFILEMENT WAS COMING IN. EVERY AGE WOULD FEEL ITS SCARS.”

Do you see what happens when men begin to organize around a certain idea that isn't based solely on the full Word of God? People begin to organize and divide. **These things destroy fellowship and literally bring hatred.** Can you think of how this might look today? Are there other believers in the message that you disagree with on things? Perhaps there is a church across town that sees things slightly different? Be careful not to divide from true believers! Don't allow bitterness to come in. This church in Smyrna began at this time to organize, and this is why there was bitterness!

So the false church began to organize. Then they began to push out the true church and say they weren't the real church. They began to persecute the true church.

Blaspheming the church today

So, this false church set themselves up as if they were the real true believers. Since they really WEREN'T true believers, how do you think they felt when they came around true believers? They didn't like it at all!

Isn't it shocking how true Christians are always treated? The people who are genuinely the most loving, the most helpful, and the ones who are there to help fallen man are the ones everyone hates. WHY? This doesn't make sense. Why would anyone persecute a true believer, who is doing nothing but living his life to help others?

Why is this? Because the true church is a rebuke to the false church. The true church exposes the false, merely by being true! No one likes to be exposed!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 119 – 130

Questions

- 1) "... the seeds of the doctrine of Nicolaitanism, and which would shortly be the actual seat or power of _____."
- 2) Do you think satanic religion looks scary? _____
- 3) How long has the anti-Christ spirit been here? _____
- 4) How did the Israelites get ahead of God? _____
- 5) When you want to be like the rest of the world, what are you doing with God? _____
- 6) What three things does organization do?

- 7) _____ has taken place of _____. _____ has replaced _____.
_____ has replaced _____.
- 8) The church has become a _____.
- 9) When you see a _____ or _____ structure that's not of God.
- 10) *Challenge/Application:* Can you describe an instance of question 9? _____

Memorize: *"If you are a Christian, you will get back to what the Spirit is teaching, that is, the Word of this age. Every messenger to every age will preach that Word. Every fresh and true revival will be because men have gotten back to the Word for their age."*

Lesson 26 - Smyrna: Tribulation Ten Days.

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days:" (Revelation 2:10a)

This period of history was one of danger for the Christians. They were persecuted by almost everyone. While they were persecuted by the false church, which was rising up, they were also persecuted in particular by Rome. This would change in the next age, but here in the Smyranean time it was largely by Roman Emperors.

Perhaps you remember Nero? The emperor who burned Rome and blamed the Christians? He persecuted the Christians in Rome, but most of the Christians of that time period were unharmed. There were localized persecutions in that time. This means that the Christians were persecuted in small areas at any given time.

In the Smyranean Age, many years have now passed since Nero, and a wicked emperor named Diocletian now rules the Roman Empire. Jesus tells the church *"Ye shall have tribulation ten days"*. Brother Branham tells us this was the symbol for ten years of persecution. Diocletian persecuted the Christians, not just in Rome but elsewhere as well. It wasn't the leader of the city of Smyrna persecuting men like Polycarp. No, it was a full scale persecution that covered the entire Roman Empire for ten years.

During this ten year period the persecution was very severe. Entire towns of Christians were burnt. An army legion of over 6000 men, who all professed to be Christians, were killed because they would not sacrifice to an idol and help kill other Christians. At first they *"decimated"* the legion, which is to take 1 out of every 10 men and kill them. The legion of Christians still refused to sacrifice after that so they were *"decimated"* again. Still they would not be moved, so they were all killed by non-Christian soldiers. Many, many Christians suffered torture and death during this ten year period.

You may think it is terrible or cruel of God to allow these persecutions to happen to his children, but in the next lesson, we will see what the reward is for overcoming. We will see that being faithful unto death is okay because God gives a crown of life. We will see that the true believer might be destroyed from this earth, but never destroyed from God's presence!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 130 – 133

Questions

- 1) So, He says “Don’t be afraid of man or what he can do to you. I am with you, and my _____.”
_____.”
- 2) “No we are not to fear. His love _____.”
- 3) Who was the cruelest of all emperors? _____
- 4) “The supreme _____ will give supreme _____
for the supreme _____.”
- 5) “The recompense of God is _____.”
_____.”

Memorize: “If you are a Christian, you will get back to what the Spirit is teaching, that is, the Word of this age. Every messenger to every age will preach that Word. Every fresh and true revival will be because men have gotten back to the Word for their age.”

Lesson 27 - Smyrna: The Reward for Overcoming.

"..be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." (Revelation 2:10b, 11)

Now here are a couple of strange statements to our minds! *"Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"*. Read that again. Does it make sense? So, I die, but somehow I get a crown of life. Now, if you were not familiar with the fact that Jesus rose again, you would think death is very final. This makes sense to us only because we recognize that there is life after death!

Now, let's consider *"second death"*. What is this saying? We must consider there is more than one life if there is more than one death.

So, we can see here that our reward for following Christ unto death is not being part of the second death. What is that second death?

Brother Branham explains to us what it is in this lesson. He tells us there is no eternal Hell. Hell might last a REALLY LONG TIME, but it is still created and therefore part of TIME. One day TIME will end, and we will slip on into eternity where there is no TIME anymore. The second death is just that, time will end and everything that is a part of time will be annihilated. It will cease to exist. It will forever be cast out of God's presence.

Because we are part of HIM, we will live eternally. Those cast into the lake of fire are not part of HIM, so how could they live eternally? We will read today:

"DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS DOES? IT MAKES ETERNAL LIFE A MATTER OF GEOGRAPHY INSTEAD OF A PERSON. ETERNAL LIFE IS GOD – THE LORD JESUS CHRIST"

This reminds me of the Scripture:

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5:12)

Assignment: Reading: Pages 133 – 139

Questions

- 1) In what Scripture do we learn that hell was created? (prepared) _____

- 2) What does “*destruction*” mean in the Greek? _____

- 3) What does the word “*part*” mean in Revelation 21:8? _____

- 4) “*Jehovah God, a crying baby in a stinking barn*” was a sign to what type of people? _____

- 5) Why does the second death have no power over the believer? _____

Memorize: *“If you are a Christian, you will get back to what the Spirit is teaching, that is, the Word of this age. Every messenger to every age will preach that Word. Every fresh and true revival will be because men have gotten back to the Word for their age.”*

Lesson 28 - Smyrna: Ears to Hear

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;” (Revelation 11a)



To every age God says this: *“He that hath an ear.”* Obviously, it is not talking about a literal ear, although, how nice it would be if all people heard! This doesn't exclude Malchus the servant of the high priest because Peter struck off his ear (He was healed soon after). So it makes sense to us that we are talking about a different kind of ear, and a different kind of hearing.

We understand then, it is a spiritual hearing, and not a physical one. Remember how we've learned that we're a three part being? We are a soul, then spirit, then a body. If it is not with our physical ears that we are hearing, then it must be our spiritual ears. Let's look at what Paul said in I Cor 2. He says

“We have received...the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God”

So, we have the Spirit THAT we might KNOW. It is the SPIRIT OF GOD that allows us to KNOW things. As this isn't just an exhortation to hear, and let it go in one ear and out the other, we find out that it is talking about hearing as in UNDERSTANDING.

Remember, you are not just a body walking around earth. You are a spiritual being! You can be filled with the Spirit of God which will enable you to hear His Voice. You can have a natural birth and a spiritual birth.

Your ear to hear is not a physical ear. It is a Spirit to hear the Word of God.

When Jesus told the Pharisees, *“Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”* (John 8:43,44) He was telling them they couldn't understand Him because they didn't have a spiritual birth! They had the wrong father; the wrong spirit. They couldn't hear because of the wrong spirit in their lives.

Thus we can see the evidence of the right spirit in your life, the evidence of the Holy Ghost, is to HEAR what the Spirit is saying.

Things God's word DOESN'T SAY: About being filled with the Spirit.

Nowhere in the Bible do we find that speaking in tongues is the evidence of the Holy Spirit. Nowhere do we find ANYTHING that gives you a definitive evidence of the Spirit in your life, other than hearing God's Word, receiving the truth for your day. You don't find in God's Word any of the following are evidence of the Holy Spirit:

- 1) Helping little old ladies across the street.
- 2) Being kind to your brother or sister.
- 3) Cleaning your room without your mother telling you.
- 4) Speaking in tongues.
- 5) Singing a special in church.
- 6) Memorizing the verses your teacher really, really, really wants you to know.
- 7) Believing Jesus died for you.

Now, these things can be fine and good things, but they are not the evidence of the Spirit in your life. This list is found *NowhereintheBible* 3:37!

Based in Scripture we find that the Holy Ghost is a TEACHER. He will teach us all truth.

Did you notice number seven on that list? Did this shock you? We must not stop at merely believing. We must go ON to receive the Holy Ghost AFTER you believe. Another verse NOT found in the Bible

Be born again and THEN be Spirit Filled – NowhereintheBible 3:41

Because merely believing on Jesus doesn't make you born again. Receiving the Spirit of Christ into your life is to be born anew, a new spiritual birth. Believing is good, but IF we believe, we will put on Christ. (Gal 3). If we believe that Jesus died, we know He also rose again to pour out His Spirit upon us.

We receive the Holy Ghost AFTER we believe. It is this Holy Ghost that gives us EARS TO HEAR the Word for our day. We want to HEAR HIS VOICE to our day. We want to go on to receive the Holy Ghost AFTER we believe. Today's lesson includes a great study of the Scriptures on receiving the Holy Ghost after we believe.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 139 – 148

Questions

- 1) It doesn't say "He that hath a _____ let him say what the Spirit is _____."
_____.
- 2) Only a _____ can hear the revelation for that age.
- 3) If the Spirit wasn't inside you wouldn't hear the truth and receive it by revelation if you heard it _____.
_____.
- 4) They were a group that heard the messenger and his message and _____
_____.
- 5) They have no power for they stop _____
_____.

Memorize: *"If you are a Christian, you will get back to what the Spirit is teaching, that is, the Word of this age. Every messenger to every age will preach that Word. Every fresh and true revival will be because men have gotten back to the Word for their age."*

Lesson 29 - Smyrna: Eternal Thoughts

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;” (Revelation 11a)

WARNING! Today’s lesson is REALLY DEEP. It will require some heavy brain power and a healthy dose of the Spirit to reveal it! Pray up before you begin the lesson and ask God to help you understand.

Name Exercise

For today’s lesson I want you to think about the possibility that you will be a parent one day. Let’s say you are going to have three children. (*I’m sure you want many, many, more as children are such a blessing from the Lord, but to keep the lesson shorter we’ll stick with three*) Let’s go ahead and write down what their names *might* be.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

Now, that we have three names down, let’s ask a few questions. When did you think of those names? Have they been in your mind for a while? Perhaps you are saying “I thought of them 30 seconds ago.”

Correct, either way that thought BEGAN in your mind at some point in TIME.

Now, let’s consider the THOUGHTS of GOD. Let’s consider when you, as an elect child of God came into God’s thinking.

We know that God is ALL KNOWING (omniscient), right? Was there ever a time when He wasn’t all knowing? No. God has always been omniscient. If there was ever a time He wasn’t omniscient, how would we consider Him to be omniscient now? Perhaps there would be more He could learn. But God doesn’t learn anything - He already knows EVERYTHING. (Ok, take a short break...let that all soak in. Three deep breaths. In...Out. Ok, ready to continue?)

So, when did God first think about you? When did God first think “I’m going to have a child born on the earth that is going to believe Me, his/her name will be _____” (your name there)? Your thought began perhaps a little while ago, but God’s thought of you, and who you are, always was with God. God’s thoughts are ETERNAL. God didn’t come up with your name at some point, it always existed. Remember, eternal means without beginning or end. So if God’s thoughts are eternal, they never had a beginning!

So, if you were a thought in God’s mind at one point, that means you are a manifested THOUGHT of God. If you are an ETERNAL THOUGHT of God MANIFESTED, then you have an “*eternal quality*”.

Eternal Thoughts and Redemption

What does the Word redemption mean? Redeem: (verb) *To buy back. To restore to the original owner.*

So, if we have been redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, we have been bought BACK to something. We have been bought back to a state we always were. Consider the following:

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:” (John 10:27)

Now, you have to be a sheep to hear the Voice of the Shepherd. So how then, if you aren't a sheep, do you hear? You can't. So how do you become a sheep? You can't. You always WERE a sheep. You hear the Voice of the Shepherd, because you were always a sheep. You were ALWAYS in the THOUGHTS of God. At some point you finally HEAR HIS VOICE and follow Him because you were a sheep to begin with.

Let's look at another story Brother Branham tells often. In the Church Age Book, it's on page 153/167 p176. One day an eagle was born in a chicken coop, because a farmer moved the egg. The eagle acted like a chicken, because that's all he ever knew, it was all he'd ever seen. One day his mother was flying over and spotted him, so she screamed. When he heard the scream, he took off after her and stopped acting like the chickens. When did the Eagle become an eagle? It always was an eagle!

When did you become a child of God? If you're a child of God, it's because you were in the eternal thoughts of God, and you are now expressed (or manifested), in this day.

This is probably a new thought for you, but it's something God has always known!! Isn't God absolutely amazing!!?? Take some time to worship Him today for how amazing He is.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 148 – 153

Questions

- 1) Why did Joshua and Caleb get to go to the promised land? _____

- 2) *Challenge/Application:* Think of the other 10 spies. If you would have asked them before they became spies “Do you believe the Word?” what do you think they would have said? If you asked them “Do you believe Moses was a prophet?” what do you think they would have said? _____

- 3) Who was the perfect and complete thought of God? _____

- 4) Does the Bride come from the same source as Jesus? _____

- 5) Redeem means _____.

- 6) Can a son of God go a long time before recognizing he is a son of God? _____

- 7) Once a son of God hears the cry of the Spirit by the Word what will he do? _____

Memorize: *“If you are a Christian, you will get back to what the Spirit is teaching, that is, the Word of this age. Every messenger to every age will preach that Word. Every fresh and true revival will be because men have gotten back to the Word for their age.”*

Lesson 30 - Smyrna: Placed as Sons

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;” (Revelation 11a)

As we talked about in the last lesson, the eagle in the chicken yard always was an eagle. There was never a time where the eagle became a chicken, the eagle always was an eagle. So, if you are a son of God, when did you become a son of God?

“To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” (Galatians 4:5-7)

If we look at the law of adoption, we find that sons were born, but they were not yet heirs until they were trained and the father had confidence in them. Then they had a ceremony and PLACED the son as a FULL HEIR SON. He always was a son, but before the adoption he did not have any more rights than a servant in the household.

As we continue this train of thought, we may feel the following: “If I always was a son, I don’t really have a free choice. Everything is all decided and I’m either a son, or I’m not, so there is nothing I can do about it.” You cannot forget, however that God is eternal. Eternity works different than our finite minds. God knows by foreknowledge what you would choose. It is not you, the person, that always existed but it is the Word Seed that was always in God’s mind. Since we don’t know all things in our mind, we must choose our path. That choice tells us whether you were there or not.

Hearing the Word for the Age

You will hear Brother Branham say in this book over and over that the evidence of the Holy Spirit in your life is that you hear (receive) the Word for your age. What else could it be? It is inconsistent to say that you have the one Who wrote the Word in your life, and to reject the Word He is saying. Yes, if you have the Holy Spirit, there will be other fruits as well. You will love others and have peace and joy in your life, but other people can have what looks like love, joy and peace in their lives and still reject the Word.

Why do we keep talking about accepting the Word for our AGE? Other Christians in denominations believe the Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God. Why do we say they don’t have the Holy Ghost? We look to what the Bible, as our absolute, is saying. In EVERY Church Age, spoken of in Revelation chapter two and three, God speaks to an Angel: *“Unto the angel of the church of Smyrna...”*. In each age, God is addressing ONE messenger. God is speaking to the Church, but it is coming by way of a messenger. So, if God is speaking to the church, through a messenger, and we reject what that messenger is saying, we are rejecting what God himself is saying to the church. How can you do that and say you have God in your life? We need to look plainly at what the Bible is saying.

Consider the following:

Jesus -> Angel/Messenger - > True and False Church

That is the progression. Jesus speaks to the messenger, the messenger speaks the message to the church, both true and false.

IF YOU ARE GOING TO HEAR GOD IN YOUR AGE, YOU WILL HEAR IT THROUGH THE MESSENGER. There is no other way to receive it.

Now, the messenger may not have a global ministry. The messenger may not be alive when you are there to hear it. How then would you receive the message? The message can be broadcast to all by those who are faithfully taught. Those faithfully taught should be sure to say only what the messenger is saying. We're blessed to have tape recordings of the messenger to our age, so we can hear for ourselves, and know that the faithfully taught are saying exactly what the messenger said.

Personal Revelation

Now, be careful in what you consider hearing. Hearing is revelation. Who do you receive revelation from? Do you receive it from the messenger? Do you receive it from a faithfully taught minister? No, revelation comes from God directly to you. You do not receive a group revelation. You do not receive a revelation that is specifically individual to you, meaning something different than what others are receiving. The true revelation will be God revealing what the messenger has already spoken to you as an individual. It is never a group thing. There will be a group of people that are all believing the same thing, but this group will be composed of individuals who have a personal revelation of what the Spirit spoke to the age by way of the messenger.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 153 – 157

Questions

- 1) What is redemption? _____

- 2) What is the Baptism of the Holy Ghost? _____

- 3) Do we believe in the pre-existence of souls? _____

- 4) What comes predestinated eternally from God? _____

- 5) The true evidence of being baptized with the Holy Ghost is _____
_____.
- 6) How many messengers does the Word come to for each age? _____
- 7) After the messenger comes how does the message get spread further? _____

- 8) How do we get back to revival? _____

- 9) *Challenge/Application:* Which do you esteem (want) more? The Word or a nice juicy steak.
Vegetarian version: Which do you esteem (want) more? The Word or a nice helping of steamed broccoli
with lime juice? _____

Memorize: *“If you are a Christian, you will get back to what the Spirit is teaching, that is, the Word of this age. Every messenger to every age will preach that Word. Every fresh and true revival will be because men have gotten back to the Word for their age.”*

Congratulations! You finished Chapter 4. We’re almost halfway!

Lesson 31 - Pergamos: The Messenger and the City

Here we are, at the start of another age, where we discuss the messenger and the characteristics of the city.

Do you remember how we choose the messenger?

That's right, Brother Branham looked for someone that followed the *pattern* of what the Apostle Paul was like! So, we look for someone who was against organization, who had the fruits of the Spirit and held to the Word of God. Brother Branham looked for that and chose Martin.



Martin, known as Martin of Tours

It is instructive for us to look at the lives of these men as well. Martin certainly was an exceptional man.

“NEVER COULD HE BE INDUCED TO PREACH UNTIL HE HAD FIRST PRAYED AND WAS IN SUCH SPIRITUAL FRAME AS TO KNOW AND DELIVER THE FULL COUNSEL OF GOD BY THE HOLY GHOST SENT DOWN FROM HEAVEN.”

Wow! Even with people waiting on him to come out and preach, he would still wait to hear expressly from God. This is something we all can learn from. Do you wait until you hear from the Lord, before proceeding?

“BUT NOT ONLY WAS HE GIFTED BY A GREAT MINISTRY, HE HIMSELF WAS FOREVER TRUE TO THE WORD OF GOD. HE FOUGHT ORGANIZATION. HE WITHSTOOD SIN IN HIGH PLACES. HE CHAMPIONED THE TRUTH IN WORD AND DEED AND LIVED OUT A FULL LIFE OF CHRISTIAN VICTORY.”

Are you ready to be a champion of truth? To withstand sin? Remember, persecution was still happening all over the world while he was championing truth and withstanding sin. The cost of discipleship can be high, but Martin did not look at that!

“NO ONE EVER SAW HIM ANGRY, OR DISTURBED, OR GRIEVING, OR LAUGHING. HE WAS ALWAYS ONE AND THE SAME, AND SEEMED SOMETHING BEYOND MORTAL, WEARING ON HIS COUNTENANCE A SORT OF CELESTIAL JOY. NEVER WAS ANYTHING ON HIS LIPS BUT CHRIST, NEVER ANYTHING IN HIS HEART BUT PIETY, PEACE AND PITY. OFTEN DID HE WEEP FOR THE SINS EVEN OF THOSE HIS DETRACTORS, WHO WHEN HE WAS QUIET AND ABSENT ATTACKED HIM WITH VIPEROUS LIPS AND POISONED TONGUES. MANY HATED HIM FOR VIRTUES THEY THEMSELVES DID NOT POSSESS AND COULD NOT IMITATE; AND ALAS! HIS BITTEREST ASSAILANTS WERE BISHOPS.”

This is something we should strive to have. How do you get this kind of unruffled calm? We can only be like this if we are that close to Christ and that full of faith. This reminds me of General Jackson, during the civil war. He said he did not fear the hour of his death because God had already appointed when he was to die, so why should he run in fear during the battle?

We can also learn from his weeping for the sins of those who hated him, but should have loved him. Today's included Scripture reading will give us more light on how that should look in our own lives.

The City Of Pergamos

Let's review just a moment the church ages we've studied so far.

Age	City	Meaning	Messenger
1 st	Ephesus	Relaxed, Let go	Paul
2 nd	Smyrna	Bitterness	Irenaeus
3 rd	Pergamos	???	Martin

As part of this course, you should have the cities and messengers memorized in order. Start now and it'll be easy to build that into memory.

Before we look at the main characteristic of The city of Pergamos, we want to note the meaning of "*Pergamos*" which is "*married*". This won't make much sense now, and we won't cover how the meaning of the word applies just yet. We are really going to get into it soon though!



Pergamos Altar of Zeus

The major characteristic of the city was "*Satan's Seat*" as mentioned in Revelation 2:13. Was this merely because there was an altar to Zeus that looked much like a throne? Perhaps. We will see why this was truly Satan's seat and how it had moved here. As we study this chapter in the Church Age Book, we're going to draw connections to Balaam, and all the way back to Nimrod! We're going to study these two men and what their doctrines were. Hopefully you're already familiar with the basics of the stories of Nimrod and Balaam.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 158 – 162, Matthew 5:43 – 48

Questions

- 1) The believers of the Pergamean Age were not fooled by the _____ of beauty.
What does this mean? _____

- 2) The Pergamean messenger was _____.
- 3) (True/False) Signs and wonders were evident in Martin's life. _____
- 4) (True/False) When assassins came to kill Martin he fought with them and won. _____
- 5) Did the so-called Christians feel like they were doing God a favor in getting rid of soldiers of the cross?

- 6) Martin was forever true to the Word of God. He fought _____

- 7) Many hated him for the virtues _____

Memorize: *“So when a Spirit-born, Spirit-filled man in faith takes that Word into his heart and places it upon his lips, why that is the same as Deity speaking. Every mountain has to go. Satan cannot stand before that man.”*

Lesson 32 - Pergamos: The Salutation (Repetition, Repetition, Repetition)

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;” (Revelation 2:12)

Repetition because of importance.

In today’s lesson, Brother Branham will repeat some topics that we have learned already. Now, anytime you see someone repeating something, you have to ask yourself, “Why? Why do they repeat the same information?” It is not because the author assumes you are slow and cannot catch it the first time, but because of the IMPORTANCE of the information.

Yet, it isn’t even Brother Branham repeating information because he thinks it is important, he himself is only highlighting that GOD in every Church Age is highlighting and repeating some central themes. Let us look at the salutations of the first three ages.

“These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;” (Revelation 2:1b)

“These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;” (Revelation 2:9b)

“These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;” (Revelation 2:12)

What is the central theme in all of these verses? Analyze them for a few minutes. About Whom is each verse referring to? What qualities of this Person are being reflected?

Deity. Each verse is pointing us to the *deity* of Jesus Christ.

DEITY: NOUN:

DIVINE CHARACTER OR NATURE, ESPECIALLY THAT OF THE SUPREME BEING; DIVINITY.

Each verse is building and showing us more about Who Christ is. This last one in particular shows us that Christ and the WORD are the same. We know that sharp sword with two edges is the Word of God, if we compare it with Hebrews 4:12. We can also look at John 1:1 and know that God IS His Word. We see here yet another look that JESUS IS GOD.

So, we begin to see the salutation in each Church Age is building up Who Christ is. Showing us Who He is and His qualities. Take your Bible and begin to look at Revelation 2:18, 3:1, 3:7, and 3:14 and see what else is to come.

At the start of EACH CHURCH AGE, we find that God is showing John more about Who Jesus is. It is repeated in each age because of its incredible importance.

The WORD

We see in this age that Christ is identifying Himself with the Word. In our reading today, we will again be reminded of how important the WORD is in our lives.

Again, we see repetition on another theme. See how each age is ended:

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

The reason we are given the Word is to hear It!

The Word is the Evidence

Notice some of the statements Brother Branham makes in our reading in the Church Age Book today:

- *“The Word always comes to the truly Spirit-filled. That is the **evidence** of being filled with the Holy Ghost. That is what Jesus said would be the **evidence**.”*
- *“and if you have the Holy Spirit as the prophets, the Word would come to you. You would receive it.”*
- *“He said the **evidence** would be that you would be in the TRUTH; you would be in the Word of God for your age. **Evidence** has to do with receiving that Word.”*
- *“The **evidence** of a Spirit-filled Christian believer is not to produce the truth (Word), but to receive the truth (Word), **and to believe and obey it.**”*
- *“The **evidence** of receiving the Holy Ghost today is just the same as it was back in the day of our Lord. It is receiving the Word of truth for the day in which you live.”*

We see much repetition here because, at the time Brother Branham wrote this, many people thought the evidence of the Spirit was speaking in tongues, or some other gift. Brother Branham is showing us, most clearly, that is not the case.

We don't worry about the gifts, because as Brother Branham writes, *“Jesus never did stress the importance of the Works as He did the Word. **He knew that if the people got the WORD the works would follow. That is Bible.**”*

In our next lesson, we will see that when we take the Word into our hearts and place it on our lips, It will be the same as Deity speaking! We'll see that once we have the Word, the true manifestation in our lives will be evident.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 162 – 170

Questions

- 1) What does the word *Logos* mean? _____

- 2) What is the double meaning of the word *Logos*? _____

- 3) In the context of the word “*declare*” what is it that Jesus the living Word did for us? _____

- 4) “The proof of the indwelling Spirit was to _____ and _____
what God’s prophet gave for his age as he set the church in order.”
- 5) “The evidence of a Spirit-filled Christian believer is not to produce the truth (Word), but to receive the
truth (Word), and _____.”
- 6) What does the Bride speak? _____

- 7) “True manifestation is the evidence of the Spirit doing _____.”
- 8) If you want Deity in your midst, what should you do? _____

Memorize: “So when a Spirit-born, Spirit-filled man in faith takes that Word into his heart and places it upon his lips, why that is the same as Deity speaking. Every mountain has to go. Satan cannot stand before that man.”

Lesson 33 - Pergamos: Pick up your pen and write

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;” (Revelation 2:12)

Power of the Word

“...ye have not, because ye ask not.” (James 4:2b)

This Scripture and many others are used by preachers of what we call the “*prosperity gospel*”. They take this and say, “See what the Word says? Ask for a million dollars, ask for a big house, and God will give it to you!”

Now, doing what the Word says is VERY POWERFUL, but we must be sure it is actually the WORD, and not our own idea of what it says.

Brother Branham tells us *“If it isn't in the Word you can't have it. So we can't ask unless it's in the Word, and we can't petition or ask unless it is in His Name.”* So when it comes to asking, we are supposed to ask according to the will of God, *“nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”* (Luke 22:42b)

However, IF indeed, as Spirit filled believers, we take God's Word and speak exactly the Word in the Will of God, we KNOW we will have exactly what we asked for. Brother Branham says:

“SO WHEN A SPIRIT-BORN, SPIRIT-FILLED MAN IN FAITH TAKES THAT WORD INTO HIS HEART AND PLACES IT UPON HIS LIPS, WHY THAT IS THE SAME AS DEITY SPEAKING. EVERY MOUNTAIN HAS TO GO. SATAN CANNOT STAND BEFORE THAT MAN.”

So, it is not just anything you say in faith, but speaking the WORD in faith. The importance is on the Word. As we discussed in the last lesson *“Jesus never did stress the importance of the Works as He did the Word. He knew that if the people got the WORD the works would follow. That is Bible.”*

The Word and the Bride

There are so many wonderful things in these pages of the Church Age Book. Brother Branham brought out this section in the sermon *“Spoken Word is the Original Seed”*. He tells us he was instructed to pick up his pen and write what the Spirit was speaking to him. This ought to remind us of Revelation 3:14!

In this section Brother Branham tells the believer they will be a SUPER CHURCH, a SUPER RACE. How exciting these things are to us; they are what we will become, and hopefully what we are well on our way to becoming! There's more!

Potentials

“They will have His potentials” – Do you know what your potential is? The ability to be just like Christ.

We begin to read that the harmony that exists between Jesus and the Father will now exist between the bride (that's us) and Jesus. Here's where the power of the Word begins to blend with the Bride so that they are Deity speaking today – just as we've already read!

Planting

The Word is planted in us, and we don't doubt It and we know exactly what to do with It.

Need an example of this? Think of Joshua and Caleb. They heard the Word of the Lord through Moses. So did the other ten spies who went with them to spy out the land of Canaan. Now, Joshua and Caleb knew what to do with the Word. They KNEW the land was theirs. The others doubted It. Just like Joshua and Caleb WE must have the Word in us from our messenger

Patience

Another thing brought out in today's lesson is this: *"Those in the Bride do only His will. No one can make them do otherwise. They have "thus saith the Lord" or they keep still."*

What a lesson we have here on patience! Once we have the Word, and we know what to do with it, we also must wait for the right time.

Prophets

Finally, in today's lesson we'll read a bit about prophets. We'll read about staying with the prophets, because that is staying with the Word. We'll read that if we want to identify a prophet, we must give them the Word test. We'll come to see what that last end-time prophet's ministry will look like. It will be the Word again!

A little review: Remember what true prophets cry out? Check out page 84, the first paragraph/page 90 p71!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 170 – 176, I Corinthians 15:40 - 47, Luke 21:19

Questions

- 1) “So when a _____ in faith takes that Word into his heart and places it upon his lips, why that is the same as _____.”
- 2) “In these last days the true Bride Church (Christ's seed) will come to the _____, and she will be the _____, a _____, as she nears Him.”
- 3) Who was the first Son of God? _____
- 4) Who was the second Son of God? _____
- 5) Why is the bride a virgin? _____
- 6) *Challenge/Application:* The Bride will have His potentials. What does this mean? _____

- 7) Moses, Elijah, and John all withdrew to the wilderness because _____

- 8) How do you tell evil spirits apart from good spirits? _____

- 9) Which comes first, signs or the Word? _____
- 10) Why will many misunderstand the messenger in the last day? _____

Memorize: “So when a Spirit-born, Spirit-filled man in faith takes that Word into his heart and places it upon his lips, why that is the same as Deity speaking. Every mountain has to go. Satan cannot stand before that man.”

Lesson 34 - Pergamos: The Eulogy

"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth;" (Revelation 2:12)

Works Vs Faith

Did you catch the repetition again? "*I know thy works*" is something said in every age. He knows the good works and the bad. God DOES look at the works. Yes, He knows our hearts, but He also knows our works.

What kind of activities occupy your time? What kind of works do people see in your life? Now, we know that we are not saved by our works, but *as always there is a balance to everything*. Our works should SHOW our faith. As we read today, Brother Branham, referring to I John 3:7, says "*what a man DOES he IS.*"

You can't tell everyone how much you love God, how much you want to live for others, how much you want to praise and worship God, and how your heart is just bursting for God, and it not be on display. If you go about living for yourself, playing video games, watching movies, talking bad about others, and avoiding church and then suddenly you die in a car wreck; what do you think people will say at your funeral? "Oh, they loved God sooooo much, really they did; you just couldn't tell because they had a funny way of showing it." Rubbish!

We speak many times about the Word being a "*seed*". That is because, just as you can plant a seed and it brings forth fruit, the same thing happens with the Word. When the WORD is planted in your life, It should bear fruit. If It doesn't bear fruit, something is wrong.

Don't forget, what a young man or young woman DOES is what he/she IS.

Holdest fast my NAME

Read the first paragraph of the section "*Thou Holdest Fast My Name*". At the end of that paragraph is a verse of the song "*Take the Name of Jesus with you*" that perhaps you often sing departing church. After reading how the Pergamean believers enjoyed that Name, does it make the song mean more to you?

Here again we see that Christ is commending those that keep His Name. His Name is important, not only in baptism, but in identifying HIM. Imagine if you had a friend that could never remember your name. "Hey, uh... you in the green!" Not just someone you barely knew, but someone you considered a good friend. Yet they could never remember your name. You would very likely become upset at them at some point. "Hey! I have a NAME. It is _____". If they continued to not care about your name, what would you think about them?

I think we can see, yet again, that the NAME of Jesus is very important. He tells us this, many times in His Word. No wonder we baptize in His Name. No wonder we pray in His Name. No wonder we take that Name with us everywhere we go.

The Faith OF the Son of God

Remember our first section? What a man DOES he IS. Now, we look at the balance of that. While it is true your works EXPRESS your faith, your works are NOT your faith.

If you go to church and say, "Jesus died for me," but it's merely a mental faith, you don't have the faith OF the Son of God. You must have a rebirth. You must be filled with the Spirit of Christ and He must give you of HIS own faith.

You must have a LIVING FAITH!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 176 – 180

Questions

- 1) *Repetition:* Brother Branham notes another repetition in this section. What is it? _____

- 2) *Review:* What other things are repeated in each age?

- 3) What does true salvation bring? _____
- 4) If a man is born of the Word what will he do? _____
- 5) (True/False) It was difficult for the Pergamean Age believers to serve the Lord. _____
Is it more or less difficult for you? How so? _____

- 6) What does the word "*apostacized*" or *Apostate* mean? (you might need a dictionary) _____

- 7) (True/False) It was Peter's faith that raised the cripple man. _____
- 8) Many believers in church are "*mental believers*". If that isn't right, what do you need to have instead? _____

- 9) Paul said "*I live by the faith _____ the Son of God.*"
- 10) (True/False) Satan triumphs when believers are killed. _____

Memorize: "So when a Spirit-born, Spirit-filled man in faith takes that Word into his heart and places it upon his lips, why that is the same as Deity speaking. Every mountain has to go. Satan cannot stand before that man."

Lesson 35 - Pergamos: Where Satan's Seat is

"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." (Revelation 2:13)

Serving God in Satan's backyard

The first application we can see in this Scripture, is how valiant these believers in Pergamos were. They were literally in Satan's Headquarters. They were being persecuted and killed for not denying the Name of Christ or His faith.

In our day, we can see the same thing. Yes, our persecutions are much different. They are more persecutions of the mind than of the flesh. Make no mistake however, you are in Satan's backyard today. Your life is under the gun of the devil every day. Worship God or worship your flesh is a choice you have to make every day. The devil has turned the persecution around to make you think you are dying if you DON'T serve him. "Think of all you are missing out on. You can do all kinds of things in your life if you just don't worry about what God thinks" Yes, the devil gives us all kinds of temptations to get us to turn and deny the Faith and the Name of Christ.

So, will you be a modern Antipas and die out to yourself to serve Christ?

Satan's seat through the ages.

"And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel," (Genesis 10:8 – 10)

As we look at Satan's seat being in the city of Pergamos, we can wonder, "Has Satan's seat always been there?" Indeed not. At its start, the seat of Satan was in Babel after the flood. Of course you're familiar with Babel, as in the Tower of Babel!

In our lesson today, we will read a lot of non-biblical, historical references from ancient times. These histories weave into our knowledge from Biblical history, and prove exactly what the Scriptures are teaching us.



Pergamos Altar of Zeus

So, we begin to understand that Nimrod's father Cush, the son of Ham began idolatry. This idolatry was popularized and spread by his mighty son, Nimrod. The tower of babel began to be built to unite the world under this idol-worship head.

Babel became Babylon. Notice the similarity? Ba-Bel. Ba-Byl-lon. So, this was where Satan was trying to steal God's worship yet again. Satan wants to be worshipped as God. This was the start of and central location of paganism after the flood.

From there you know that, at some point, Babylon became a great empire and took the lower half of Israel (Judah, it's capital Jerusalem) into captivity. From the book of Daniel, we read of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and we know this as the head of gold.

Finally, we know that Rome is "*Mystery Babylon*" as we read in Revelation 17. Babylon certainly has quite a few references in Scripture.

How did Satan's seat go from Babylon, to Pergamos, and finally to Rome? Great question!

When the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon during the time of Daniel, the king-priest escaped and fled to the location we know as Pergamos. There, they continued the ancient worship that was begun with Cush and Nimrod. Thus Satan's seat was transferred from Babylon to Pergamos.

We even understand that in Pergamos they worshipped a serpent on a pole. Sure, we understand that is very similar to the serpent that Moses put up in the wilderness, for the children of Israel to be healed from their snake bites, but where else do we see a serpent in Scripture? Ah yes, in the Garden of Eden, SATAN entered into the SERPENT. Wow! So, Satan, desiring to be worshipped as God, is now being worshipped in the form of a serpent in Pergamos. Just what he wanted.

We don't read this part in our reading assignment, but we understand from what Brother Branham teaches us, and from history, that Attalus III, the later king and priest of the ancient Babel pagan worship of Pergamos, joined up with Rome. The leader of Rome took on the titles of the pagan religion. Eventually, the leader of the "*church*" took those titles from the political leader of Rome. And so, now we see the same worship that was going on in Babel, is now going on in Roman Catholic worship. Rome is now "*Mystery Babylon*". Except, it's no longer a mystery to us. It's been revealed to us by God's prophet of this day.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 181 – 189, Genesis 10:1-10, Genesis 11:1-9

Questions

- 1) What relation was Nimrod to Noah? (Answer in Genesis 10) _____

- 2) Babel is the original name for _____.
- 3) Nimrod set out to accomplish 3 things. What were they?

- 4) "Satan has always attempted to _____ as though he were _____."
- 5) Monotheism means _____
(Use dictionary if you need to)
- 6) Polytheism means _____
(Use dictionary if you need to)
- 7) Is Christianity monotheism or polytheism? _____
- 8) Who was also called "Bel"? _____
- 9) Who was *Semiramis*? _____

Memorize: "So when a Spirit-born, Spirit-filled man in faith takes that Word into his heart and places it upon his lips, why that is the same as Deity speaking. Every mountain has to go. Satan cannot stand before that man."

Lesson 36 - Pergamos: The Denunciation

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." (Revelation 2:14,15)

Denouncement introduction.

Before we begin today's lesson, let's make sure we understand what "denunciation" means.

DENOUNCE: VERB –

1. *TO CONDEMN OR CENSURE OPENLY OR PUBLICLY: TO DENOUNCE A POLITICIAN AS MORALLY CORRUPT.*
2. *TO MAKE A FORMAL ACCUSATION AGAINST, AS TO THE POLICE OR IN A COURT.*
3. *TO GIVE FORMAL NOTICE OF THE TERMINATION OR DENIAL OF (A TREATY, PACT, AGREEMENT, OR THE LIKE).*

So the reason this section is titled the denunciation is because God is denouncing or declaring the evil that the age is guilty of. In this case there are two things that God is denouncing:

- 1) *The doctrine of Balaam*
- 2) *The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes*

We have already talked about the Nicolaitanes. We will discuss this further as well as the doctrine of Balaam in the next two lessons. For now, we understand that God was denouncing the church for these two doctrines.

Imperial to Papal Rome: A history

We followed Satan's seat throughout history in the last lesson. Today's lesson picks up in history where the last lesson left it off, in Rome. No, wait! Let's rewind just a little and start off in Jerusalem, then we'll follow a couple believers to Rome.

On the day of Pentecost, which we read of in Acts 2, we find the disciples and 3000 converts being filled with the Holy Ghost. This was the birth of the New Testament church. The believers had all things in common, even selling their land to provide money for all. All was wonderful for a while, but after the signs and wonders began working through the believers, the devil got mad and a persecution arose. Many, fearing for their lives, left Jerusalem. God was causing His believers to leave, so the Gospel could be spread! Two of those believers were apostles named Junius and Andronicus. Guess where Junius and Andronicus went after leaving Jerusalem – Rome! They began to preach and started a church.

Just a short time later, the Emperor, Claudius, expelled all Jews from Rome. So, the leaders of the newly formed church, in the city of Rome, had to leave, and the believers were suddenly without their spiritual leaders. Being still weak in the faith, and no Bible yet to guide them, this new church drifted back into their old forms of worship.

Once the Jews were able to return, Junius and Andronicus found the church they started in a bad shape; Christianity mixed with paganism. They were forced to start a new church.

What about their old church now? Of course, this first church would not admit it was no longer Christian. They actually began persecuting the true church as they gained political influence. Thus, we find the beginning seeds of "*Pergamos*" which means, "*thoroughly married*". Christianity and paganism began to be married together. This union would only grow stronger, until we come to the Council of Nicaea.

Council of Nicaea

Finally, in our history for this lesson, which will set the stage for us to understand the doctrines of Balaam and Nicolaitanes, we come to the council of Nicaea, in the year 325 A.D.

At this time, we have a great Emperor named Constantine. Constantine wasn't a Christian¹, but he used the growing influence of this first (mixed with paganism) church. Seeing a divide in the church he proposed a council to unite everyone together. He didn't really care about the matters of the church², in fact, years after the council, he reversed his support for the decisions of the council³. He really only cared for the political strength it could bring him.

Constantine wanted a council to come together so they could unite the church that was divided over a few issues. A united church was better for him politically. So the church came together over questions of Godhead and other matters. From this council, the seeds of the Trinitarian doctrine were established.

The other thing we can see in this council, is the uniting of the Church and State, or Religious and Political powers together. It was a *marriage*! So, what started in this age as a *marriage* of Christianity and Paganism, now this married to idolatry church became married to the state as well – *THOROUGHLY married*. Not only had "*Christianity*" become married to paganism, it also became married to politics. This *marriage* to politics happened in the Pergamean Church Age.

Finally, in our reading, Brother Branham will talk of the vision Daniel is rehearsing back to Nebuchadnezzar, in Daniel chapter 2. If you want a real bonus, study this in the 70 Weeks of Daniel series. It is a really great study, but not one we have the time to undertake as we go through the Church Ages. It is amazing however, how much Scripture weaves together to make a complete picture!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 189 – 197

Questions

- 1) What year was the Nicene Council? _____
- 2) Why was it easy for the Christians in Rome to drift away? _____

- 3) Did the first church of Rome give up its title since it wasn't Christian anymore? _____

- 4) (True/False) Emperor Septimus Severus killed 7000 at Thessolonica because he wanted to leave the Christian Church. _____
- 5) "She is alive with the _____ and the _____."
- 6) "Pergamos means _____."
a. What was married? _____
- 7) "Satan now had access to the Name of Christ and he was _____"

- 8) Which Rome was wounded to death? _____
- 9) Which Rome came back to life? _____
- 10) How does Rome control more ably now? _____

Memorize: *"So when a Spirit-born, Spirit-filled man in faith takes that Word into his heart and places it upon his lips, why that is the same as Deity speaking. Every mountain has to go. Satan cannot stand before that man."*

¹ 60-1207 paragraph 117

² 60-1207 paragraph 112, 117

³ CAB page 192/212 "was reversed two years later by the emperor"

Lesson 37 - Pergamos: The Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." (Revelation 2:14,15)

Remember in the first Church Age we talked about what a *Nicolaitan* is? The word *Nicolaitan* comes from two Greek words. *Nikao* which means "to conquer" and *Laos* which means "the laity". The *laity* are the people in the church. So putting this all together, it means "conquer the laity" or perhaps more plainly "to become ruler over the people in the church".

In today's lesson we find out how this conquering of the laity happened to the church and why God hates it.

Too hard to understand!

"...even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." 2 Peter 3:15b,16

Nicolaitan: "Wow, here's Peter talking about how hard it is to understand the Apostle Paul. Look what he says there at the end, 'people wrest these things to their own destruction!' That sounds bad. Yes sir, you had better be careful, better leave those Scriptures alone and have someone smarter and with more revelation than you break it down for you! I mean, Peter, the disciple with the keys to the kingdom struggled with it! How much more are you going to? I suppose you're going to claim to be smarter than Peter? Closer to the Lord than he was? No, I didn't think you'd say that. Flee from that destruction! Don't let one Word fall to the ground or you'll be guilty!! Here now, just let me help you. I've studied and prayed; I can guide you so as not to make foolish mistakes".

See how good they make it sound? How they even use Scripture? No doubt you can see from this how easy it would be, to be convinced to just sit and listen to someone. After all, isn't it easier to have someone figure out the hard stuff for you anyway?

So men began to allow other "smarter" or "more spiritual" men to rule over them. They began to twist the definition of *Bishop* or *Overseer* so they could have more control (and likely money) over more than one church.

True Leader

Stop for a moment and think. Why is this so bad? Yes, we know God is denouncing this, but why? How does this differentiate from what God wants? What was God's original?

“Christ never sent me to build organization. Christ sent me to build individuals to the stature of Jesus Christ, that they might be the powerhouse and the dwelling place of the Spirit, by His Word. By His Word, see, build up the individual to that place.” (62-1014m - The Stature Of A Perfect Man)

See what a true leader is? A true leader is a servant to you, not an overlord. Brother Branham stated his goal was to get YOU to a built up place in Christ. It was never to get himself above you or get a bunch of people following him. If you turn to the last page of the Church Age Book, you’ll read this:

“NOT FOR ONE MOMENT DO I BRING A MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE THAT THEY MAY FOLLOW ME, OR JOIN MY CHURCH, OR START SOME FELLOWSHIP AND ORGANIZATION. I HAVE NEVER DONE THAT AND WILL NOT DO THAT NOW. I HAVE NO INTEREST IN THOSE THINGS, BUT I DO HAVE AN INTEREST IN THE THINGS OF GOD AND PEOPLE, AND IF I CAN ACCOMPLISH JUST ONE THING I WILL BE SATISFIED. THAT ONE THING IS TO SEE ESTABLISHED A TRUE SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND MEN, WHEREIN MEN BECOME NEW CREATIONS IN CHRIST, FILLED WITH HIS SPIRIT AND LIVE ACCORDING TO HIS WORD.” (CAB PAGE 381/436)

This is a picture of the true leader. A God sent leader, not one elected through politics, will lead the people by feeding them the Word.

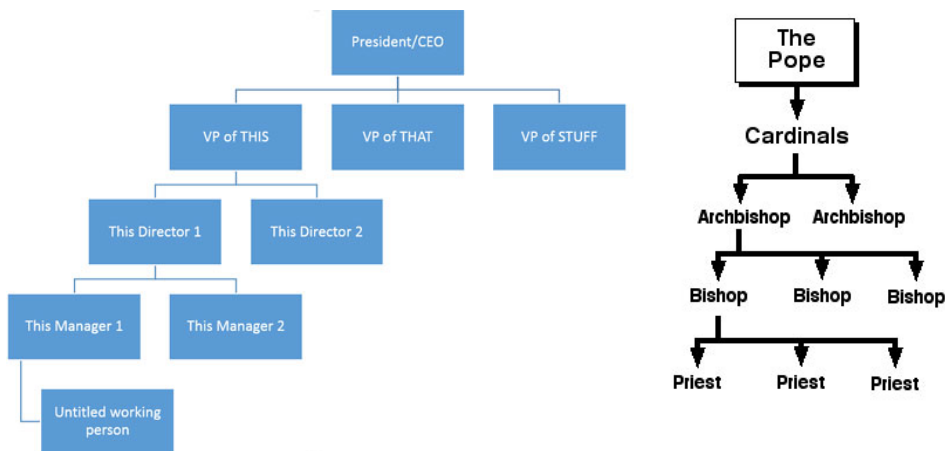
You see, God wants a relationship with YOU. He doesn’t want you to have man rule over you. It is CHRIST Who sits on the throne. Yet, God gives us Spirit-Filled men to care for us and feed us the Word, so that we can grow to be what He wants us to be. God wants the entire congregation to be on the highest level of worship and stature of Christ!

Hierarchy

HIERARCHY NOUN: ANY SYSTEM OF PERSONS OR THINGS RANKED ONE ABOVE ANOTHER.

Think of how a cooperation in today’s world works. You have a *hierarchy* of positions. One man is over a few other men, who are in turn over even more, level upon level. If you are a “normal” employee of the company, there are many levels between you and the President.

The Nicolaitan church began to organize and structure in the same way. God never intended for this hierarchy. In a big company it would be impossible for a President to deal with every issue that all employees have, but God isn't like that! He's so big, so great, so vast; it's His plan that He talk to you directly! He doesn't consider you an employee, but His bride! He longs for a daily communication with you!



Once a structure like this is set up, men become accountable to the man above them. Men begin to desire the higher positions; and politics and rewards begin to influence the church. The organization takes away what God intended to be the leadership of the Holy Spirit upon individuals. The organization usurps God's authority. In short it tries to take God's place of influence over the believer – no wonder God hated it!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 197 – 201

Questions

- 1) What are the two doctrines that God says He hates?

- 2) Recall what Nico + Laity is. What is the laity? _____

- 3) How do *God-ordained* men lead the people? _____

- 4) Nicolaitanism makes ministers/leaders _____ instead of _____.
- 5) Bishop is an _____. Elder is the _____.
- 6) What makes someone an elder? _____

- 7) "Whoever will be chief among you, let him be your _____."
- 8) What is our hope? _____

Memorize: "So when a Spirit-born, Spirit-filled man in faith takes that Word into his heart and places it upon his lips, why that is the same as Deity speaking. Every mountain has to go. Satan cannot stand before that man."

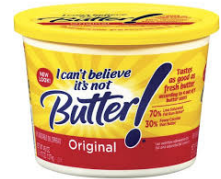
Lesson 38 - Pergamos: The Doctrine of the Balaam

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." (Revelation 2:14,15)

Substitution

Did you ever have a substitute teacher? Someone who fills in for your normal teacher is a substitute.

How about margarine? Have you ever spread margarine on your toast? It's a substitute for butter. It looks like butter, tastes like butter, and you can hardly believe it's not butter – but it isn't!! It's a SUBSTITUTE!



We have many substitutes in our lives. Typically, a substitute is never as good as the real thing.

That's what *"The Doctrine of Balaam"* ultimately was. It was a substitute for the real, true worship of God.

The Story of Balaam

You're likely very familiar with the story of Balaam and his talking donkey. What might be less familiar to you is how he presented his doctrine to the children of Israel.

As we consider our Scripture, we see that Balaam taught Balak how to get Israel to sin. We don't really see this in the book of Numbers, but God, speaking here in Revelation shows us a more complete picture. This information fills in the apparent gap between Balaam leaving, in Numbers 24, and Israel sinning, at the beginning of Numbers 25. What you don't see, as the cause for Israel to sin, in the book of Numbers, is shown to us in Revelation. The doctrine of Balaam.

After Balaam went to Balak, but would not curse Israel, all we see is him leaving in Numbers. What we aren't told, is how he formulated a plan for Balak to get Israel to sin. Inviting Israel to the feast of Baal-Peor was Balaam's idea. While there, the Israelites began to mix themselves up with the Moabites – contrary to the will of God.

Character of Balaam

Even in the story of Balaam, we can draw out his character. No, he would not curse Israel, but he did want things his own way, didn't he?

The first point of Balaam's doctrine stems out of his character, a desire to do things his own way, and not perfectly what God is leading him to do. This manifests itself in the doctrine of Balaam. Anytime you don't want exactly what God wants, you must replace it. God's plans are never modified for us. He doesn't change, so if we modify God's plan, it isn't a slight change to "make it better", it is a full substitution. It may look like God's plan, but it is NOT his plan.

Baal-Peor and Nicaea: Harmless?

Baal-Peor was a feast to Baal. The Israelites were used to Egyptian idolatry so they didn't find this feast to be as repulsive as it really was. They joined the Moabites in what they thought would be harmless.

Nicaea was a council to get everyone spiritually on the same page. It seemed harmless, and maybe even beneficial to go.

In both circumstances, it was the true believers joining up with false, Nicolaitan group; the organized group. What ended up happening, was a substitute of true worship; a merging of idolatrous feasts, with the true worship of God. As our Scripture says, "*to eat things sacrificed unto idols*", it was a feast! Constantine at the time of Nicaea mixed Pagan feasts with Christianity.



Why is Christmas Day on December 25th? When did that start? Around the time of the council of Nicaea, Constantine mixed the sun god's birthday festival with the Son of God's birthday.

Why is Easter called Easter? Why is it celebrated today with rabbits and eggs? It is a mixing of Christianity with paganism. Easter comes from *Astarte* a goddess of fertility; thus the eggs and rabbits. Rabbits are known for their fertility and rapid breeding.

These two holidays are a mixing of truth with idolatry. A substitute. The leadership of the Holy Spirit didn't bring that about, but a Nicolaitan leadership of man's ideas in substitution brings ideas like that about.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 201 – 208

Questions

- 1) How do you spell substitution? _____
- 2) “Israel were _____ of their day.”
- 3) How many answers from God are enough? _____
- 4) *Challenge:* What do you do if you don’t like God’s answer? _____

- 5) (True/False) God sent the Spirit upon Balaam? _____
- 6) The doctrine of Balaam is “Go ahead _____, do it _____.”
- 7) What can’t take the place of Spirit-manifestation? _____
- 8) Organization will do what to the unorganized? _____
- 9) How did God want to see Israel? _____
- 10) What happens when a man joins a church instead of receiving the Holy Spirit? _____

- 11) What do organizations & denominations do? _____

Memorize: “So when a Spirit-born, Spirit-filled man in faith takes that Word into his heart and places it upon his lips, why that is the same as Deity speaking. Every mountain has to go. Satan cannot stand before that man.”

Lesson 39 - Pergamos: Warning and Reward

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth." (Revelation 2:14-16)

Warning

Choose your opponents wisely if you're going to do battle. Here, we are told that if we fight the Word, or if we bear the Name of the Lord in vain, because of our sin, we will find the WORD fighting us.

Consider the Scripture Revelation 20:5, *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."* Do you want the Word fighting you with this truth? What a scary thought!

So, God in His Grace cries out for us to repent. Repent, so you don't have to be fought against.

As we said, choose your opponents wisely. In a battle between you and God, who do you think is going to win? Don't put yourself in a sinful, Word fighting position. Repent and come to the Grace of God, not the Sword of God.

Reward

Now that we have talked about the warning, let's get on to the good stuff! The rewards! Do you like rewards? I know I do.

The idea of rewards are different than gifts. You are rewarded because of something good you have done! So, it's not just the reward, but the satisfaction that you've done something worthy, that is worth the reward!

Remember, the things that we have identified that are repeated in each age? Brother Branham adds another one to the list today. The newest thing we identify as being repeated is the *"incentive to the believer"*. Those who overcome are well rewarded!

Not only are the overcomers rewarded, but here we get to see that God rewards His faithful messengers as well. Each messenger gets the wonderful privilege of presenting the people of the Bride of their day to Christ. Aren't you glad that God gives His messengers a little extra reward? Surely His messengers bear a huge responsibility! It's nice to know God is so faithful and considerate!

The rewards for overcomers are the Word pictures (*symbols*) of hidden manna, a new name, and a white stone. Let's look at what those mean.

Hidden manna

I'm sure you remember the manna that fell for the children of Israel as they journeyed through the wilderness, but do you remember what other food they needed to keep them healthy? Well? You're right, that was a trick question. They didn't need anything else.

Christ, as the bread from heaven, is all we need. No other nutrients, just wake up and scoop up some manna of the WORD. It has all the vitamins you'll ever need. In the early Church Ages, the true Word manna was hidden from the people. It became hidden. But God is restoring It to the people through His final Church Age messengers.

Hidden = special knowledge

“The hidden manna,’ a little something special. What is the special? Not something to...The blessings of the Holy Ghost? Oh, no, that’s for the whole congregation. But the ‘hidden manna’ was a special revelation ‘cause he had to teach the others.” (60-1207 – The Pergamean Church Age)

New name

Throughout Scripture it is important to note that new names either brought about a change to the person or were given because of a change. He knows the new name but we do not, one day we will too! It's important for us to realize that this doesn't give us bragging rights *“oh yeah, I'm spiritual, I've got a new name”*. No, consider what Brother Branham said here:

“A new name, a new name written in this rock that nobody knows but he himself.’ He knows who he is, but he can’t tell others. See? See? No one knows but himself. See? Peter knows he had the keys, but you didn’t hear him bragging about it. See? These guys who brag about what they are is usually nothing. Uh-huh, uh-huh. ‘A white rock, and in it a new name’” (60-1207 – The Pergamean Church Age)

White stone

We aren't looking for a beautiful palace here, but hold on, God will give us one someday. The false church had big buildings with beautiful columns, idols, and such that are common to Greek and Roman architecture, but the white stone God will give is of great beauty and eternal duration! Now, the false church's beautiful architecture is in ruins. Our white stone will never decay or fade!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 208 – 212

Questions

- 1) Can God overlook the sin of those who have borne His name in vain? _____

- 2) "Those who fought the _____ will one day find the _____."
- 3) "Each message to each age holds an _____ to the _____."
- 4) "Each messenger has a great responsibility as well as a _____."
Bonus: what was that privilege? _____

- 5) "In every age God began to give back by _____ that which was _____."
- 6) Who does God give manna to? _____
- 7) He won't open His treasures to those who _____.
- 8) "Abraham, Sarah, and others names were given because of a _____ or brought about a _____."
- 9) God will give the believers what kind of rewards? _____
How long will they last? _____
- 10) Review: What five things are repeated in each age?

Memorize: "So when a Spirit-born, Spirit-filled man in faith takes that Word into his heart and places it upon his lips, why that is the same as Deity speaking. Every mountain has to go. Satan cannot stand before that man."

Congratulations! You finished Chapter 5. We're a little over halfway!

Lesson 40 - Thyatira: The Messenger and the City

Columba

Brother Branham chose Columba as the messenger to the fourth Church Age. As we've studied, the keystone was that God doesn't change and the ones who are the messengers are the ones who *"influence that age for God by means of a Word-manifested ministry."* Let's look at the quote below:



"AT THE TIME OF THE GIVING OF THE REVELATION, ACCORDING TO TRADITION, PAUL HAD ALREADY DIED A MARTYR, BUT JOHN WAS CARRYING ON IN HIS STEAD EXACTLY AS PAUL HAD DONE IN THE DAYS OF HIS MINISTRY. THE DEATH OF PAUL, BEFORE THE REVELATION WAS GIVEN, DOES NOT AT ALL ANNUL THE FACT THAT HE WAS THE MESSENGER TO THE EPHESIAN CHURCH AGE, FOR THE MESSENGER TO EVERY AGE, REGARDLESS OF WHEN HE APPEARS OR GOES, IS THE ONE WHO INFLUENCES THAT AGE FOR GOD BY MEANS OF A WORD-MANIFESTED MINISTRY. PAUL WAS THAT MAN." (CAB PAGE 76/81 P39)

This is very instructive to us, as this age was from 606 A.D. – 1520 A.D. Columba was born and died prior to this point. Brother Branham tells us:

"ABOUT 60 YEARS AFTER THE DEATH OF SAINT PATRICK, COLUMBA WAS BORN IN COUNTY DONEGAL, NORTH IRELAND, TO THE ROYAL FAMILY OF FERGUS. HE BECAME A BRILLIANT, CONSECRATED SCHOLAR, COMMITTING TO MEMORY MOST OF THE SCRIPTURE. GOD CALLED HIM IN AN AUDIBLE VOICE TO BE A MISSIONARY. AFTER HE HAD HEARD THE VOICE OF GOD, NOTHING COULD STOP HIM, AND HIS MIRACULOUS MINISTRY HAS CAUSED MANY HISTORIANS TO ACCLAIM HIM NEXT TO THE APOSTLES. SO GREAT WAS HIS MINISTRY WITH THE SUPERNATURAL SIGNS FOLLOWING THAT SOME (ESPECIALLY STUDENTS IN ROME) HAVE THOUGHT THE ACCOUNTS WERE EXAGGERATED." (CAB PAGE 218/241 P22)

St. Patrick died in the year 461 A.D. Columba was born in 521 A.D. and died in 597 A.D. Is it a problem that he lived and died prior to the age? No, it is not. His ministry still influenced that age more than any other. Keep in mind this age spans the *"Dark Ages"*. To the following Church Age God will say *"thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead"*¹ So dark was the age, that it was a ministry that happened BEFORE the age began that influenced it the most.

Let's take a moment and focus on his life. Brother Branham stated he committed most of Scripture to memory. My! What an achievement! Do you commit Scripture to memory? Perhaps you may not commit *"most"* of Scripture, but surely you can commit some! What a benefit this is, *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."*²

Columba lived a life and had a ministry in the same pattern as the other messengers. He held to the truth of God's Word and his life had manifestations of the Spirit. Rome wasn't so much of a factor for Columba, until after his death the Roman Catholic Church came in and tried to claim all that Columba had done, and twisted it to their version of *"Christianity"*. Columba held to God's Word as Truth and prayerfully worked and proclaimed it, steering clear of politics.

Thyatira: The City

Thyatira was a city that was led in worship by a woman. It is no coincidence then that God chose this spot to proclaim His disgust with “*that woman Jezebel*”. Thyatira worshipped Apollo, and Apollo spoke to them through a “prophetess”.

Three things you should note here are

- 1) **Apollo was the son of Zeus.** This is a direct perversion and substitution for Jesus the Son of God. We’ll discuss this concept more as this age was notable for its substitution of the Son of God in more than one way
- 2) **The prophetess of Apollo.** Thyatira means “*dominating female*” or “*continual sacrifice*” The believers were continually sacrificed because of a dominating female church. Jezebel is mentioned as a reference to Ahab’s wife in the Old Testament.
- 3) **Guilds.** A guild was sort of like a union of workers. You couldn’t belong to a guild in Thyatira, unless you worshipped in the temple of Apollo. You couldn’t work unless you belonged to a guild.

Recall that Revelation is a book of symbols. The things that God includes in here are pictures for us to gain deeper meaning. It took a prophet to see and write these symbols, and it takes a prophet to declare these truths to us!

All these things point to what the Roman Catholic Church did during the age of Thyatira. They set up a pope to be in “*the stead of the son of God*”. The church as we know in the Bible is typed by a woman, and unless you belonged to the Catholic Church they tried to have you killed or ousted out of society.

In Thyatira, you were part of the worship of Apollo, or you were out. During the Thyatirean Age, you were part of the Roman Catholic Church or you were out. We’ll look more in depth into these types in the coming lessons.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 213 – 220 Memorize: Psalm 119:7 - 16

Questions

- 1) What was the reason the Spirit chose Thyatira as the city for the fourth age? _____

- 2) What type of chair did the prophetess of Apollo sit on? _____
Bonus: What does that make you think of? _____

- 3) What does the name Thyatira mean? _____
- 4) When a woman wears pants and cuts her hair she is intruding into what? _____
She is doing this to take what? _____
- 5) Was the Thyatirean Age the longest or the shortest? _____
- 6) “After Columba heard the voice of God, nothing _____.”
- 7) What was the weapon of choice for the men in the colonies that were built under Columba’s leadership?

- 8) Columba’s followers were independent from whom? _____

¹Rev 3:1

²Psalm 119:11

Lesson 41 - Thyatira: The Son of God

“And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;” (Revelation 2:18)

We begin today’s lesson, noting what God speaks about Himself in this age; “*saith the Son of God*”. In this age, He is identifying Himself directly as the Son of God. He does not do this in His message to any other church, there must be a reason - and there is!

Son of God, Son of Man, Son of David

We know Jesus is the Son of God. Did you know that God manifests Himself to us in three forms? Son of Man, Son of God, and Son of David. Consider the following:

“Now, look, as Son of David, He was with the Jew. But the Son of God... Now look. Son of man, prophet. See? Son of David, king. They recognized Him not a prophet. They wanted to make Him king. They wanted to be delivered out from under the Roman Empire. But then in the church age, He is called the Son of God. Now, anyone knows that God is a Spirit. Is that right? [Congregation says, "Amen."--Ed.] And the Holy Ghost is the Son of God. He's supernatural. Son of man was a prophet, a man; David was a king; but God is a Spirit. And in the church age, He's revealed as Son of God. We believe that. You don't believe He's the Son of God, you're lost. He's the Son of God to the church age.” (64-0427 - A Trial)

We know Jesus is the Son of God. When He was here on earth though, He was referred to as Son of man, because Son of man is a prophet. In Ezekiel chapter 2, God calls Ezekiel “*Son of man*”. After Jesus fulfilled His life here on earth, He arose and took on the form of Son of God. When He reigns during the millennium, He will be Son of David.

Remember the woman from Canaan, whose daughter was grievously vexed by a devil? The story is in Matthew 15:21-28. She refers to Jesus as the Son of David. Because she was not a Jew, Jesus did not respond to her as Son of David.

So, we see that Jesus has different manifestations. We know He is a Father, a Son, and the Holy Ghost. He is also Son of Man, Son of God, and Son of David. He is Prophet, Priest and King! As a prophet on earth Jesus was “*Son of Man*”; as our High Priest in Heaven He is “*Son of God*”; when He reigns as King on Earth in the Millennium, He will be “*Son of David*”.

In Thyatira, as we have said, He identifies himself as the Son of God. Brother Branham says He lived through the Church Ages as the Son of God.¹

Apollo: Son of Zeus

As you've read, Thyatira was noted for its worship of Apollo. Apollo was the son of Zeus, who was worshipped by the Greeks as the highest deity. In Greek/Roman mythology, Zeus was the highest deity on Mount Olympus. Zeus had a son, whose name was Apollo. It was through this son, also known as "*the sun god*", Greeks had atonement, and it was through Apollo that the "*will of god*" was communicated by way of prophets and oracles. In Thyatira in particular, Apollo spoke through a prophetess on a tripod chair.



Does any of this sound familiar? We know Jesus is the Son of God. It is through HIM we have atonement. It is by HIM that all things are created and consist.² Jesus expressed to us His Father's will.

Apollo was sitting in the place that Jesus truly sits. God is opening the letter to this Church and identifying Himself as the Son of God, in DIRECT CONTRAST to Apollo being the son of Zeus. This is one of the reasons God chose Thyatira for this age, because what is happening in this age, is a replacement of the Son of God, just as Apollo did in Thyatira.

Attack on the Son Of God

This age really represented an attack on the hearts of men turning towards Jesus as the Son of God. In this age began the rise of Mohammedanism, or Islam, as we refer to it today. The religion of Islam rejects Jesus as the Son of God.

Also during this age, we find the Catholic Church has deified the pope. The pope has become the "*vicar of Christ*" or the one who sits on earth in the stead of the Son of God. Satan was rising up his own "*son of God*", to take place of the Holy Spirit as the Son of God in our hearts.

Going back to our opening verse of Scripture for Thyatira, the Son of God's eyes are a flame of fire. Why wouldn't they be? In Thyatira, Jesus was replaced by Apollo. In the Thyatirean Age Jesus was replaced by the pope, or discarded by Mohammed.

Don't ever forget that He is YOUR High Priest. He is set down on the throne of God to make intercession for you. It is a personal, individual walk and relationship that we have with HIM. Don't ever substitute anything or anyone in His place.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 220 – 221, Colossians 1. Memorize: Psalm 119:7 - 16

Questions

- 1) “God won’t surrender His _____ over the _____ to any _____.”
- 2) Whom did the city of Thyatira worship as the Son of God? _____

- 3) The Roman Catholic Church elevated whom to the son of God status like Thyatira did Apollo? _____

- 4) This age gave rise to Mohammedanism/Islam. What does this religion deny? _____

- 5) As Prophet He is Son of _____.
- 6) As Priest He is Son of _____.
- 7) As King He is Son of _____.

¹ Para 69 64-0514m

²Colossians 1:16,17

Lesson 42 - Thyatira: The Eulogy

"I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first." (Revelation 2:19)

Works

We should take a moment to recall what we have learned about "*I know thy works*" in each of the ages. We have mentioned the following:

- What a young man or young woman DOES is what he/she IS.
- God says He knows your works. It depends on your works, to know if that is a commendation, or a rebuke.
- God tells EVERY age, "*I know thy works*". God is looking at our works. He knows what we're doing.
- Jesus knew if people got the WORD, the works would follow.
- It is HIS BLOOD that perfects us, not our own works.

Consider the following quotation, from our reading for this lesson:

"NOW WORKS WILL NEVER TAKE THE PLACE OF FAITH IN GOD FOR OUR SALVATION. BUT WORKS WILL SHOW FORTH OUR FAITH ALREADY PLACED IN HIM."

Let us make no mistake, works do NOT save us. We do not look to what we do for the Lord as the indicator of our salvation. Our salvation depends on the finished work of Christ at Calvary.

This is an age-old balancing act. We cannot help the poor and think we are saved. Yet, if we are saved, we are living *CHANGED LIVES*¹, which will follow the leading of the Spirit to live for others!

Brother Branham told us that "*Eternal Life is living for others.*"² We should look at our motives and objectives and see if we have a changed life that causes us to live for others.

Love

In between "*I know thy works*" and "*thy service*" is "*thy love*". Love is the motivator of it all. Without love, we are nothing. Without love, our works mean nothing, nor does our service.

Have you ever done something for someone because you were SUPPOSED to, but you really didn't want to? That's what Jesus is indicating here in this passage. He not only knew their works, but He knew they did their works because of LOVE.

Ask yourself, do you want people to do things for you just because they are obligated to? It's nice to have things done, but isn't it nice to know that people do things for you because they love and care for you? It sure is!

We need to make sure that our love is for OTHERS, much more than it is for our SELF! These last days the spirit and culture of the times is self-love – the very OPPOSITE of Eternal Life.

Service, Faith, Patience and oh...more works!

So, what is Eternal Life? Ah yes, living for others! Loving others rather than yourself puts you in service to them. The great men of history were servants to others. Is it hard to always be a servant? Yes! It will require the right kind of change in your life. It will require the right kind of love.

Looking at the condition of the age these Thyatirean believers had to live through will be very instructive to us. They had to live through great persecution. They had to live through the Inquisition, which was a brutal arm of the Catholic Church, that tried to force people to convert to Catholicism.

While the believers of that age served, they went through great persecutions. This proved their faithfulness and their patience. If you are being faithful to God and things aren't going right, what do you do? Have patience.

“There is absolutely no other way in which to gain patience. It has to come by the trial of our faith³”

Service, Faith, and Patience all go together. When these believers were put through trials of their faith, they endured it with patience and kept on serving others the best they could. Why? To do otherwise, is to love yourself more than others. We started by saying these believers lived *CHANGED LIVES!* When the Holy Ghost comes in your life, It changes you. It calls you to increase your service in the hard times. It calls you to love others more and more. It calls you to even give your life for others, just as these Thyatirean saints did, just as Jesus did.

So, you are saved by His Grace; How have you *RESPONDED?* Our lives should show a continual sacrifice for others. The Apostle Paul tells us to “*present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*”⁴

Are you ready to present your body as a living sacrifice? Live for others; not merely because it's right, but because you're living a *CHANGED LIFE!*

Assignment: Reading: Pages 221 – 225, James 2. Memorize: Psalm 119:7 - 16

Questions

- 1) Works don't take place of salvation, but what do they show? _____

- 2) God commended His Thyatirean Children for what? _____

- 3) If you are a Christian you are going to do what? _____

- 4) What two specific times will you do God's will?

- 5) Works and Service are not accepted without what? _____
- 6) History shows us great people were those who? _____
Can you think of some examples? _____

- 7) God says "Well done _____."

¹ Page 222/245 p37

² 60-0925 Para 84,85

³ Page 224/247 p46

⁴ Rom 12:1

Lesson 43 - Thyatira: The Rebuke and the Woman Jezebel

*"Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not."
(Revelation 2:20,21)*

Church(es)

We find through the Church Ages that God is speaking to two churches, but He's speaking to them as if He is speaking to one. Hopefully you recall our earlier lesson (beginning of Chapter 3) on True Vine and False Vine. These two vines that started at the very beginning are continuing on throughout the Church Ages.

Verse 23 says *And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

No doubt you see that! All Churches! There are more than one that God is referring to.

What is Right, What is wrong?

To the True Vine Church, as we see in the last lesson, God was commending Her works, love, service, faith, and works. She had done good and right things.

Now, He turns to the false vine church. He rebukes and warns her about what she has done. She has suffered or tolerated that woman Jezebel, The Roman Catholic Church.

Jezebel

As we've studied previously, on Nicolaitanism, the Doctrine of Balaam, the Council of Nicaea, and Constantine; all these important concepts and events now come to full maturity. This is not a good thing of course!

We now look to Jezebel, who became the prophetess, who continued to propagate these ideas throughout the Dark Ages. (Thyatira)

I'm sure you remember Jezebel from the Old Testament. This woman came from an idolatrous land and married King Ahab. Ahab didn't marry her for any reason, but politics and power. When he did this, Jezebel brought in her idolatry and influenced him to set up temples for Ba'al and Astarte.

It was of course Jezebel that persecuted Elijah and the true worshippers of God.

Parallels: Jezebel, Constantine, Apollo and the Roman Catholic Church

The reason God is speaking out about tolerating that woman Jezebel, is because the false vine church of the day was doing the same things that Jezebel did in her day. Remember, Revelation is a book of symbols. Everything has a meaning, and in our day we had a prophet to show us what that meaning is!

So, we can see parallels in this age. In our reading this lesson, we will have the following identified for us:

Ahab married Jezebel for political power.	Constantine became a Christian for political power.
Jezebel erected big buildings for idols.	Constantine gave the church buildings and set up altars.
Jezebel forced her religion on the people to point of death.	Thyatirean believers were forced to convert to Catholicism to the point of death.
Jezebel taught the Israelites about idolatry. (Apollo's prophetess taught the people)	Roman Catholic Church (woman) is now teaching the people.
Apollo.	Pope.

I'm sure you can see those parallels, between the city of Thyatira, and it's spiritual condition; and Jezebel, and the Thyatirean Age. As we look at those parallels, history begins to make plain God's meaning to us in the verses that apply to this age.

Cure for Idolatry

At the top of page 231/255 p73 Brother Branham gives us a quotation from Pope John the 23rd. He talks about how *"the Lord's will"* was *"conveyed to me through the Sacred College of Cardinals."* So, this pope felt God's will was given to him, because of the decisions of men.

Let's contrast this pope's experience with I Peter 1:23 *"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."*

"Now, She, the true Bride, so sold out to Him, that She use no mind of Her own. His mind, of course, is His will, and His will is His Word." - 65-0429e

The cure for Idolatry is the Word of God. We don't do something, because men say we should. God gave us His will when He gave us His Word. When we do what men say, we've joined up with organization and sold out our birthright. Stay with the Word!

Have you memorized all of Psalm 119:7-16 yet? Keep going. Take HEED to His Word!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 225 – 231 Memorize: Psalm 119:7 - 16

Questions

- 1) What verse tells us God is speaking to more than one church? _____

- 2) Are those who are "*false vine*", Christians? _____
 - a. If so, in what way? _____
 - b. If not, how aren't they? _____

- 3) What makes a Mohammedan a Mohammedan? _____

Can Christians be Christians for the same reason? _____

- 4) Ruth's induction into Israel was _____ admission.

- 5) Chart the progression of death in the church.
Deeds -> _____ -> embraced _____ ->
_____ -> Lake _____

- 6) If you join up with an organization, what do you sell? _____

Lesson 44 - Thyatira: Sentence Against the Harlot

“Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He Which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.” (Revelation 2:22,23)

The Harlot

Now, what is a whore or a harlot?

“Remember, mother Rome, was found in her, full of blasphemous names, a mother of harlots. Then, if they are harlots, what is a harlot? What is a whore? Same thing as a harlot. It's a woman that lives untrue to her marriage vow. And any church that claims to be the Church of Christ, and denies God's Word, she's untrue to her marriage vow! Then she commits adultery by adding dogma, whoredom with the world and her wisdom, instead of accepting Christ and the power of His resurrection, power of the Holy Ghost. And she's the mother of harlots that done the same thing.” (62-1111e – Why I’m Against Organized Religion)

So, this woman, we know, is the false vine church. She has lived untrue to her marriage vow, by claiming to be the Church of Christ, but denying His Word and adding other ideas to it.

So, the Catholic Church is this woman, and she had daughters. These daughters are the other denominational churches, that have come out of her. They are just like their mother, they are organized and are living untrue to Christ, though they would deny it.

Let’s connect today’s lesson to our previous one, so we can see it really clear. We said God gave us His will when He gave us His Word. So what we are saying here, is that a church is to stay true to the WORD of God. She is not supposed to mix anything with it. She is not supposed to interpret the Word, or have an idea of what it means and organize around that. The full WORD, not mixed with our ideas, is so important!!

Athaliah, Daughter of Jezebel, Like Mother – Like Daughter

Have you ever read the story of Athaliah in the Old Testament? She was just like her mother Jezebel. She married the king of Judah, Jehoram. Jezebel brought idolatry to Israel, Athaliah brought it to Judah.¹ She was just as bloody as her mother. When her husband died, she tried to kill all the royal children, so she could retain the power of the throne.

This pattern continues in type. The daughters of, *“that woman Jezebel”*, are just like their mother. These denominations have come out of Catholicism, but organize themselves and take other ideas, and are living untrue to Christ.

Anytime the church *“rejects the Word and takes any other headship she is an adulteress.”*²

The Punishment

We learn here that the punishment is two-fold.

- 1) The Tribulation Period
- 2) Death

The tribulation period for the five foolish virgins is very easy for us to understand. As you read through the pages of today's lesson, you may be a little confused by the word "death".

Perhaps the following quotation from when Brother Branham preached this in 1960 will help bring clarity:

"What is... what kind of a death there's her children be killed with? You see they're dead now! Spiritually dead! They have no revelation! They know their organization, they know their catechism, they know their doctrine of the church; but when it comes to knowing God, some of them don't know no more about It than a Hottentot would know about a Egyptian night; that's right, when it comes to really knowing the Holy Spirit." (60-1208 – The Thyatirean Church Age)

So, as we see today, when a church denominates, or organizes, sets up a creed or dogmas, they die right there, spiritually. If something is spiritually dead, how can you punish them with death? Ultimately, Jezebel and all her daughters will be cast into the lake of fire. The second death.

It's important to stay true to the Word of God. Don't ever take an organization. Don't ever allow Nicolatianism or Baalamism into your life – they will produce organization. Stay humble, free, and follow the Word.

"THEN THE LIGHT OF ONENESS OF THE GODHEAD CAME. THEY ORGANIZED AND THEY DIED TOO. THEN AFTER THE FIRE OF GOD FELL ON THE OHIO RIVER IN 1933 A HEALING REVIVAL SWEEPED THE WORLD, BUT IT NEVER CAME THROUGH ANY ORGANIZATION. GOD WENT OUTSIDE THE PENTECOSTAL GROUPS, OUTSIDE OF ORGANIZATION, AND WHAT HE IS GOING TO DO IN THE FUTURE IS GOING TO BE OUTSIDE ORGANIZATION, TOO. GOD CAN'T WORK THROUGH THE DEAD. HE CAN ONLY WORK THROUGH THE LIVING MEMBERS. THOSE LIVING MEMBERS ARE OUTSIDE OF BABYLON."³

¹Jeroboam brought worship of God through idols (golden calves) but Jezebel other gods (Ba'al and Astarte)

²Page 233/257 p80

³ Page 234/258 p83

Assignment: Reading: Pages 231 – 238 Memorize: Psalm 119:7 - 16

Questions

- 1) Which was more wicked, Ahab or the Roman Catholic Church? _____
- 2) God raised up messengers, has He ever raised up any others? _____
- 3) Who/What is our ruler supposed to be? _____
- 4) Are churches in the Bible referred to as sons, daughters, or either? _____
- 5) Churches have given up the Word for what? _____

- 6) When did the nation of Judah die spiritually? _____

- 7) Who are the double corrupters? _____
- 8) Who propagates the corruption of the double corrupters? _____
- 9) What is the image of the beast? _____

- 10) Who won't be deceived? _____

Lesson 45 - Thyatira: Warning. Promise. Reward.

“And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He Which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (Revelation 2:23 - 29)

Out of the Heart

Throughout this chapter we have talked about works, and the balance between faith and works. Do you know that God knows your heart? God knows WHY we do what we do. God knows if we do things out of love for Him, or for some other selfish reason.

He sees what you do, and He knows why you do it as well. We are given a very real warning here. It is a warning that God will not only reward us according to our works, but that God searcheth the reins and hearts. These two things are together.

The Promise

The believers in Thyatira have plenty they are dealing with. God promises them that He will not put any further burden upon them. Do not confuse this promise with the reward that is coming. It is a good promise, though they are tried, yet God knows what they can handle.

The reason they can handle this is because they know the depths of God. They have the actual personal experience of the Spirit of God indwelling in them.

This changes everything.

When you have Christ on the inside, you have God’s Life, you have God’s Strength. You have everything, when you have Christ.

Then we come to one of those most potent passages in this book:

“BUT THE DEPTH OF SATAN WILL BE IN THAT HE WILL ATTEMPT TO DESTROY THIS. HE WILL AS ALWAYS ATTEMPT TO MAKE A SUBSTITUTE FOR THIS REALITY OF GOD. HOW WILL HE DO IT? HE WILL TAKE AWAY THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH OF GOD-DESTROY THE WORD BY PUTTING FORTH HIS OWN, ‘YEA HATH GOD SAID?’ HE WILL THEN SUBSTITUTE THE PERSONAL CHRIST IN OUR SPIRITS. HE WILL DO IT, AS HE CAUSED ISRAEL TO DO THE SAME; BY A HUMAN BEING REIGNING AS KING INSTEAD OF GOD. THE BORN-AGAIN EXPERIENCE WILL BE REJECTED IN FAVOR OF CHURCH JOINING.”

Satan will ***always*** attempt to make a substitute. He does NOT want you to have God’s life on the inside. He knows he is defeated by that Life. It was that Life that defeated him at Calvary and rose again the third day. He does NOT want you to receive that life, so he gives you a substitute if he can. It can be very easy to merely join a church, or follow some godly man, but God wants to DWELL in YOUR LIFE!

Just as the believers of Thyatira had pressures or persecution, we face pressures too. Our pressures are soft, easy living, riches, and nervous tension. They might seem like more preferable pressures, but any pressure that threatens to destroy our faith and bring us to death is very, very dangerous. God promises us He won’t give us more than we can handle either. He promised to give us overcoming power by His Holy Spirit!

Rewards

Power. Do you want power? Power is one of the rewards given to the believers of this day.

But it wasn’t for them right away. It was for them at the return of the saints of God with Christ. It wasn’t power for them to wield in their lives. It wasn’t something that could be used for selfish means, to gain wealth or to be delivered from enemies.

It will be a righteous power they are given. A power that brings righteous judgment to the false church.

The other reward, for the believers of the DARK Ages, is the morning star. They are promised Jesus Himself to be their Light. What a beautiful thing, God is mindful of the darkness they dwell in, and promises them an everlasting light.

Even in the Millennium we find the WORD will become brighter and brighter to us. The Word truly is everything to us. The Word is Jesus Himself. This is why we memorize, quote, and dwell in the Word.

Brother Branham asks: *“What else could we desire above Jesus Himself? Is He not everything, even Perfect Everything?”*

Assignment: Reading: Pages 238 – 242 Memorize: Psalm 119:7 - 16

Questions

- 1) Out of what proceeds righteousness or wickedness? _____

- 2) Who can be fooled? _____
Who can't? _____

- 3) What was the pressure of the Dark Ages? _____

- 4) What was the pressure of our age? _____

- 5) What is the depth of God in your life? _____

- 6) What is Satan's substitute for the depth of God? _____

- 7) *Challenge/Application:* The Spirit mentions works how many times? _____
 - a. Do you feel this is important? _____
 - b. Why or Why not? _____

- 8) *Challenge/Application:* From your heart, answer the question Brother Branham asks "what else could we desire above Jesus Himself?" _____

- 9) What is the reward promised (*incentive*) to the saints of Thyatira? (use the verses for this age) _____

Congratulations! You finished Chapter 6!

Lesson 46 - Sardis: The Fifth Church Age

But first, review!

Did you know that before Brother Branham had the Church Age Book written, he first preached the Church Ages at the Branham Tabernacle? While we are mainly looking at the Church Age Book, today we are going to look at one of the sermons. Before Brother Branham began to preach on the details of the Sardisean Age, he first reviewed the first four Church Ages.

This lesson's assignment will be to listen to (or read) the first 38 minutes of the Sardisean Church Age (60-1209). If you want to read or follow along, it is paragraphs 1 through 69 of that sermon book.

List the first four Church Ages and the messengers in order. You should begin to memorize the age and messengers. Special bonus points to those who memorize the years too!

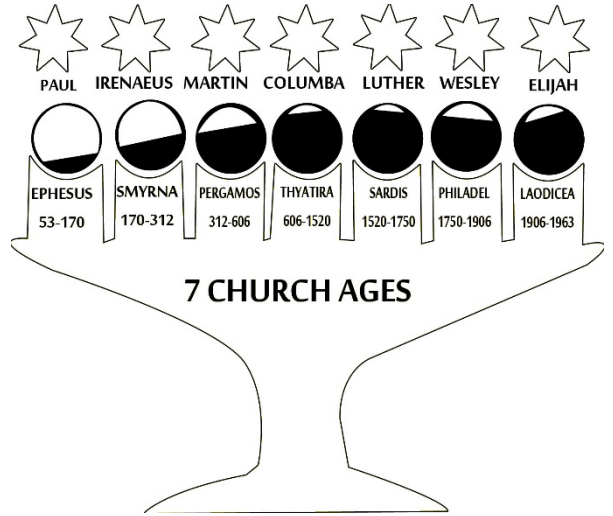
Age	Messenger	Years

After that brief review of the first four ages, Brother Branham begins to review the process the devil was corrupting the church with.

- 1) "It was quite a large church at the beginning, but they started a denominational spirit among them ... called _____"
- 2) "In the second church age it would begin to _____"
- 3) "the doctrine of denomination, it become from _____ here all the way to _____ here"
- 4) Constantine used the same strategy as who? _____
- 5) "...they suffered _____ to subdue His children; that taken place in the Dark Age."
- 6) "Jezebel had a _____... And Revelation 13 said this apostate church Rome had _____"

Revivals and Millennium

We want to look at a couple of things, that will help our understanding of the Church Ages, from a high overview level. Before we begin to study the Sardisean Age, it is a good time stop and to do a little review as the momentum begins to shift, from more and more darkness at every age, to more light at the beginning of this age in what we call the *reformation* and the *great awakening*. As you can see in the illustration on the right, the “darkness” is getting worse through each age until Sardis, then the light begins to take back some ground. It will change again in Laodicea, but in the fifth and sixth ages the light is getting greater. Brother Branham had drawn this on the blackboard, as he preached this series, to illustrate the light and dark in each age.



In Paragraph 66 of the Sardisean Age message that you just listened to/read, Brother Branham says of the Dark Age that many people thought “*the millennium was on*”. He also mentioned *Vicarius Filii Dei* in paragraphs 37 and 66.

Now, in hindsight we say “Wow, they thought the DARK AGES were the Millennium?” How is that even possible? Remember how they felt the church was really set up? At the council of Nicaea, with Constantine the church and state were *married* together. The church could persecute anyone they wanted to, because they had the power

- VICARIUS -substituting for, or in place of
- FILII - means son
- DEI - means GOD

V = 5	F = no value	D = 500
I = 1	I = 1	E = no value
C = 100	L = 50	I = 1
A = no value	I = 1	
R = no value	I = 1	
I = 1		
U/V = 5		
S = no value		
112	53	501

$$112 + 53 + 501 = 666$$

of state with them.

Then, they appointed a pope, and called him the Vicar of Christ, so they had their “*god*” sitting there on a throne on earth. This was the devil’s substitute for the true Millennium, when Christ truly comes back with His Bride, and reigns on earth. To illustrate this point, look at the image on the left. It shows how the Latin words “*Vicarius Filii Dei*” which means Vicar of God or substituting for God. They believe that the pope is sitting here on earth in the place of Jesus.

In the message “*The Third Seal*”, Brother Branham says the following about the first four ages we have looked at:

“Now, the first church age what it was? The Nicolaitane's had a doctrine (See?) just the first one. All right. And then the first thing we know this Nicolaitane doctrine, it become sanctioned and was right, went into action. And they crowned this fellow. Then this spirit, antichrist, become incarnate in a man.

See? And we find out later on he becomes an incarnate devil too. The demon goes away, and the devil comes in.

*And just as that church is--that kinda antichrist church progresses, so has the Bride come along with different things; through justification, sanctification, baptism of the Holy Ghost, just moving right on (See?), just like that. **Only they taken their revival first, and the Church is taking it the last.***

Their first three years--first three stages of them that went to the dark age, then the third three stages comes the Church out from justification, sanctification, baptism of the Holy Ghost again, incarnate God made manifest among us.

Here he comes in as the antichrist, as the false prophet, then the beast, then in dark age. And the Church comes out of that dark age, justification, sanctification, baptism of the Holy Ghost, incarnate Word, the way now. Uh-huh. And he goes down. he does... He goes down; the Church goes up. See? It's just as perfect as it can be. Oh, it's beautiful. I just love it". (63-0320 The Third Seal)

So, let's put this all together. The church started at Pentecost, and there was much light. The devil began to work through deeds and doctrines of the Nicolaitanes, Balaamism, and that woman Jezebel. The false church had three ages for a "revival" and then a dark age they thought was a millennium. They thought it was a millennium because they had their own "substitute" for Christ on earth, and believed the church was in control of everything, because they had spiritual and political power. So, the light was great at the start, but because of the devil's false doctrine, it began to be squeezed out, until it was almost gone through the Dark Ages.

As we begin to look to Sardis we come out of the Dark Ages into the true church revival of Justification, Sanctification, and Baptism of the Holy Ghost! This revival will cover the last three Church Ages that we will study in Sardis, Philadelphia, and the age we live in, Laodicea. This revival causes the light to grow a little greater in these last ages, until it takes a final swing toward darkness at the end.

Assignment: Listening: Sardisean Church Age (first 38 minutes)

Answer questions on page 128 of this workbook.

Memorize: "A person that is truly baptized by the Holy Ghost into the body of Christ receiving the fullness of the Spirit will be in the WORD ALL THE WAY."

Lesson 47 - Sardis: The City, Age, and Messenger

The Worship of Cybele

The city of Sardis was known for their worship of the female deity by the name of Cybele. At one point, Cybele and Deoious were worshipped together, but by and by, in the city of Sardis, the people came to the worship of Cybele alone, completely leaving the worship of Deoious out.

Remember, each city was picked by God for its characteristics. Brother Branham is showing us that this worship of a female deity is that important characteristic.

Why is it important to this age? It is because, as time went on, the Catholic Church began to focus on the worship of Mary and began to get farther away from the worship of Jesus.

At this point, we should review who Deoious and Cybele are. If you remember, from the Pergamean Church Age, we studied where Satan's seat was, and how it came to be that the Babylonian religion went from Babylon, to Pergamos, to Rome. The pagan religion, that was started at the time of the Tower of Babel, went through the world with different names, and because God confused their language into many languages; Nimrod and Semiramis became Isis and Osiris, Iswara and Isi, or Deoious and Cybele.

What we are learning about the worship of Cybele, in Sardis, is that this particular characteristic of that city is defining the false church of the Age of Sardis. As the men of God began to pull away from the Catholic Church and focus on Justification by faith in Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church began to focus more on "*Mary worship*". Why? Because Cybele is the same as Astarte. The Roman Catholic Church is the new Jezebel system, and who was it Jezebel worshipped? Cybele, but by the name of Astarte.

Justification or Penance

While the Catholic Church focused on lifting up Mary as a goddess, there were numerous other unbiblical things they focused on as well. One of those things was penance. They believed in inflicting bodily harm to oneself, to pay for sin, and to purify oneself. During this age, there was a friar named Junípero Serra Ferrer, who was famous for his own self-punishment, where he would beat himself to "*purify his spirit.*" He once beat himself with a chain before an audience in Mexico City. One of the onlookers felt so condemned that he grabbed the chain from the priest, and started beating himself. Serra watched as the man beat himself to death (the man was able to take the sacrament before expiring).¹

"Wow", is about all you can say. It is not surprising though, as you read your assignment, this lesson you'll notice Brother Branham was struck by the similarity between this Catholic form of penance, and how the worshippers of Cybele whipped themselves until blood spurted out. We also may think of the prophets of Ba'al on Mt Carmel – who would cut themselves. You do not find a true believer ever harming themselves in the Bible.

God raised up a man in that age, to combat these false doctrines. A man who would read where the Scripture says that man is Justified by FAITH, and understand that the things the Catholic Church said were unbiblical. That penance, purgatory, novenas, and personal works; were not the way to salvation, but Faith in Jesus Christ was! The man God raised up for this age was Martin Luther.

Martin Luther

Brother Branham gives as fine an introduction to Martin Luther as any could write, so make sure you pay close attention to that section in this lesson's assignment.

Which Luther?

Martin Luther and Martin Luther King Jr. are two different people entirely! We are talking about the Martin Luther who was a priest around 1517 A.D. and lived in Germany. Martin Luther King Jr. was a civil rights advocate, in the 1960s, in the United States. Only one of these was a messenger to a Church Age, and it was Martin Luther.



Martin Luther

The Reformation

Martin Luther lived during a time that has come to be known as the *reformation*. Why was it called that? Great question! The *reformation* essentially started when Martin Luther, that courageous warrior for the faith, nailed his 95 thesis to the door of All Saints Church in Wittenberg, Germany. He *protested* what the Catholic Church was doing! This is where we get the term "*Protestants*" which means people who *protest* the Catholic Church. He publicly wrote where he felt the Catholic Church did not agree with the Word. A new church of those Protestants began to be formed, but it still held to some of the Catholic churches' teaching. It was still a *form* of the Catholic Church, just closer to the Word. They tried to "*reform*" the old dead church, instead of starting over on the foundation of God's Word. That is why this period is known as the *reformation*. Men of God rose up and began to *reform* the church away from things they thought were wrong. It was a powerful time in history of God moving in the church, but unfortunately it was an *unfulfilled age*, that stopped short of a complete *restoration*. We will discuss this further in the coming lessons.

If you're still unsure what is meant by *reformation*, take some clay and form it into something. Next, make lots of small changes to it in various places, so that it barely resembles the original. Then, try to form it, or re-form it back to the original. That is what is meant by *reformation*; the period of time when men took the terrible form the church was in, and tried to re-form it back to the original.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 243 – 248

Questions

- 1) Cybele and Deoius were known as whom in Babylon? _____

- 2) Who began to be worshipped most between Cybele & Deoius? _____
- 3) Luther held to justification, to what did the Catholics hold? _____

- 4) What was Cybele’s name in the Old Testament? _____
Who was her priestess? _____
- 5) Luther was the time for a beginning of restoration that would continue on to what later? _____

- 6) What did Luther do more of when he had more work to do? _____

- 7) What is the basic doctrine of the truth of the Word? _____

- 8) Was Luther a prophet? _____

1 “The Vicar of God” on Branham.org

Memorize: “A person that is truly baptized by the Holy Ghost into the body of Christ receiving the fullness of the Spirit will be in the WORD ALL THE WAY.”

Lesson 48 - Sardis: The Salutation

*“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.”
(Revelation 3:1)*

We begin today’s lesson noting what God speaks about Himself in this age. “...saith He that hath the Seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars;”. We know the seven stars are in His right hand, so we know it is Jesus speaking here and identifying Himself with His messengers. This lesson will look at the Seven Spirits and what that means in context of the Sardisean Age.

Seven Spirits or Holy Spirit

Now, after all we have learned so far, you should have a real question in your mind. You should be saying “Now wait a minute, I thought God was ONE God. He has ONE name, God is ONE, how can He be ONE Holy Spirit, and yet there are SEVEN SPIRITS of God?”

AH! Great question! Not much gets past a good student like you!

Brother Branham tells us these seven spirits are the same as the seven stars, and we know those to be the seven messengers. Let’s look at how Brother Branham takes the four Scriptures referring to the Seven Spirits in Revelation and compares them across the Old Testament.

Revelation 1:4 - *Seven Spirits before the throne*

Revelation 3:1 – *That hath the Seven Spirits*

Revelation 4:5 – *Seven Spirits = Seven Lamps*

Revelation 5:6 – *Seven Eyes = Seven Spirits*

So, first we will key in on the *Seven Lamps*. It is easy to figure out what is meant by a lamp.

Proverbs 20: 27 - The Spirit of Man is the candle of the LORD

Now, we have already talked about candlesticks and lampstands being the same thing. The Spirit of Man is the *LAMP* of the Lord.

John 5:35 - *He [John the Baptist] was a burning and a shining light:*

He was a light, a burning lamp to the people.

So, let’s work it backwards now. Man = Lamp = Spirit.

We also can see from, Revelation 5:6, that Spirits = Eyes. Looking at Zechariah 4:10 we can see that there were seven eyes of the Lord, which is evident that it is men. Man = Eyes = Spirit.

Then we find the next statement "*And the seven stars*" We know who that is already. The seven messengers.

So, does God have ONE Holy Spirit or SEVEN Spirits? He is ONE Spirit, we know that, but He is working through SEVEN men throughout the Church Ages. It is the SAME (ONE) Spirit working continuously through His seven messengers.

Continuous Ministry – Unchanging ministry

Again, we are taken back to something we learned early on in this study. The keystone of the Bible is the revelation that God never changes, and is unchangeable in His ways.¹ Let us look at what we just learned about the Seven Spirits of God. If they are of God, they cannot change from one to the next, as it is the continuous ministry of the Holy Spirit. As we look throughout the Ages we find that each of these Seven Spirits, these Seven Lamps, burn with the same fire of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; they have signs and wonders following, their ministries followed the pattern of Paul's ministry. The ministry of Christ did not change, though the men He worked through were varied.

Now, let us contrast this with the false vine church that was still claiming the Name of Christ, but not actually following the Word of God. They were appointing their leaders, their popes, in direct contrast to the messengers God was sending to each age. These popes, one after the other, would change how the church operates, according to their own desires. This CANNOT be the true church! It doesn't follow the keystone.

An important Scripture we have previously referred to is Galatians 1:8. *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* See? It cannot be changed!

The Messengers are men.

Now, many times we get a lofty view of the men in the Bible, and the men God uses. Sometimes, we think that God can only use perfect men. This isn't true. Christ was the only perfect ONE; there has never been another. So, if one were to study the lives of these men, would you find them to be perfect? No. God used many imperfect men all throughout history. Though they may be imperfect, God chose each one of them for Him to use, as He used Moses to the children of Israel. He worked through these men as the Chief Shepherd ministry for each age. This is why it's so important to recognize your day and its message.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 248 – 252

Questions

- 1) What Old Testament Scriptures are used to tie the Seven Spirits to men? _____

- 2) Galatians 1:8 compares with what Scripture in Revelation? _____

- 3) What two things does the right hand signify? _____
- 4) How is the gospel preached? _____
- 5) What quality enabled the messengers to stand up to the world? _____

- 6) Who weren't the messengers sent by? _____
- 7) "Organization is _____."
- 8) As messengers these men that are the 7 spirits are comparable to what Old Testament character? _____

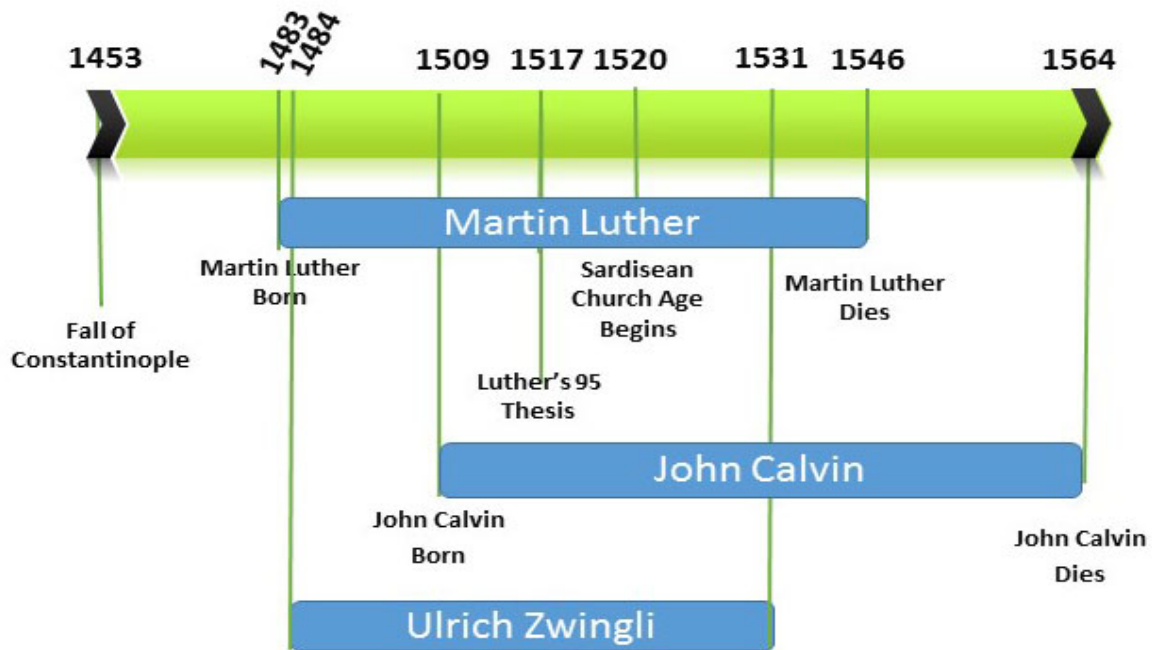
- 9) (True/False) The reason God is able to use the men He chooses is because they live exemplary lives.

¹ CAB page 66/67 p3

Memorize: "A person that is truly baptized by the Holy Ghost into the body of Christ receiving the fullness of the Spirit will be in the WORD ALL THE WAY."

Lesson 49 - Sardis: The Denunciation

“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” (Revelation 3:1)



Looking at the above timeline, we understand that the period we are considering is just after the Dark Ages. Truth had been hid from the people, by suppression of education, and not having the Scriptures in the language of the people. This age was going to change all of that. During this age, the Bible was translated into languages the common people knew. No longer were the priests of the Catholic Church the only ones who could read the Word. This yoke of bondage to the church was broken! Many men, like Martin Luther, arose to cry out the truth of the Word, which warred against the Catholic Church, and her ideas. It was a wonderful time period in that sense, but still very dark in persecution.

The question remained, with this liberation from the ignorance the Catholic Church held the people in, what would they do with the Word they now had? We begin to see in this lesson the meaning of, *“Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead”*. Those that came out of the Catholic Church had what they needed to start fresh and correctly, yet they patterned themselves after the Catholic Church. They were so used to bishops and archbishops, they couldn't understand how to get away from that and to be free in Christ, so they began to use the Word they were given to create their own new churches. They had more of the Word, but still patterned themselves after their mother, the Catholic Church. Remember Jezebel from the last age we studied? She had a daughter, named Athaliah, who patterned after her mother. This type holds in this age – the daughter (Athaliah) churches were patterning after the mother (Jezebel) Catholic Church.

Instead of living in the Name of Christ, they took on the name of their new churches. Zwingli, Calvinist, Lutheran. A name that said, "We're alive! We're Lutherans!" But what God was looking for was CHRISTIANS living according to His Word, and identifying themselves with the name that was so important to the believers of the early churches – the Name of Jesus Christ. That is why God did not praise this church at all in this age, they were not taking His Name.

Substitution: Mary for Jesus

In the Thyatirean Age we looked at a quote about substitution.

"BUT THE DEPTH OF SATAN WILL BE IN THAT HE WILL ATTEMPT TO DESTROY THIS. HE WILL AS ALWAYS ATTEMPT TO MAKE A SUBSTITUTE FOR THIS REALITY OF GOD. HOW WILL HE DO IT? HE WILL TAKE AWAY THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH OF GOD-DESTROY THE WORD BY PUTTING FORTH HIS OWN, "YEA HATH GOD SAID?" HE WILL THEN SUBSTITUTE THE PERSONAL CHRIST IN OUR SPIRITS."

This continues in this age. As Luther came preaching Justification, the Catholic Church went even further in the substitution of Christ. They deified Mary in heaven (made her like a goddess), and brought Christ down to earth as their pope. They tried to lessen the effect of Christ, and the church system took His place.

This age gave rise to denominations. Prior to this, there was basically one "*Christian Church*" - the Catholic Church. There were true believers, of course, that were not a part of this church, but they were less known. Once Luther came out of the Catholic Church, many other churches began to be organized. Suddenly, you had Lutherans who followed after Luther, Calvinists who followed after Calvin, Anabaptists broke off from Lutherans, and many other types of churches. They all had their own particular ideas or styles, but none were known by the Name of Christ alone. They took their identification from the man, or idea, that they followed. They began to bicker amongst one another, instead of enjoying the freedom God gave them from the yoke of the Catholic Church.

They had escaped the Catholic Church, but then they formed other churches, and said THEY were the door to heaven, THEY were the way to escape Hell. The "*escaped ones*" began to say, "We are the WAY of escape", instead of praising God for THEIR ESCAPE!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 252 – 257

Questions

- 1) What is different about the message to the fifth age as compared to the first four? _____

- 2) Truth only comes from? _____
- 3) Even after Luther’s teaching, how did the church remain shackled? _____

- 4) Out of where do the multitude of sects get their creeds? _____

- 5) Look up the definition for “sophist” and write it here. _____

- 6) This era gave tremendous growth to what? _____
- 7) Denominations are living in whose name? _____
Instead of Whose? _____
- 8) Churches are known by? _____
They should be known by? _____
- 9) Jezebel didn’t want to give up her hold. Who took up that hold in the Sardisean Age? _____

Memorize: “A person that is truly baptized by the Holy Ghost into the body of Christ receiving the fullness of the Spirit will be in the WORD ALL THE WAY.”

Lesson 50 - Sardis: Warning and Judgment

“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.” (Revelation 3:2,3)

The Escape

Brother Branham tells us that Sardis means “*escaped ones*”, but he tells us that is all that can be said is that they have escaped. They were “*ready to die*”. What does this mean?



Think back to the time period of slavery in America, around the time of the American Civil War. Imagine you are a slave on a Southern plantation, and that you have been dreaming of escape. Finally, the opportunity presents itself, everyone is distracted, and it will be some time before they notice you are gone. You escape and head North as fast as you can, hoping to get across the Ohio River to the safety of the North, but you are starting from Alabama. You still have to make it through Tennessee and Kentucky, a very long journey.

After some time, your master realizes you are gone. He assembles his men and the hunting dogs, and they set out after you. They intend to bring you back to slavery. You only have a head start of about five or six hours. No one will knowingly help you, all are against you, and if they see you they will turn you in. Those hunting for you have help from everyone.

That is what happened to these believers of Sardis. What kind of slavery had they escaped? They escaped denomination, but the demon hounds of that denomination were not content to let them stay free and head North to the true Word of God. They wanted them back in their denomination. So, these believers were escaped out of denomination, but they barely had any strength to stay free. They had escaped, but that’s about all that can be said. They hadn’t made it to safety yet.

Reformation

Here is where we begin to more fully understand what *reformation* truly is. These Sardis believers tried to *REFORM* the Catholic Church, but it was already dead. They tried to take this form, and mold, or fashion it to something closer to what they were reading in the Bible. They didn’t realize they needed to wipe the slate clean and start fresh. They still clung to the ideas they had about church leadership. This is understandable of course, they didn’t know anything different.

So, while it was a good start, it was the first step, it was the *ESCAPE*, yet they hadn’t made it to freedom yet. There was still a long journey to go. Unfortunately, just as many runaway slaves, most of those who escaped were recaptured back into denomination again. Perhaps it wasn’t the Catholic Church that recaptured them, but it was a denomination that became known by the name of Lutheran. It wasn’t Jezebel, but it was her daughter, Athaliah. One is just as bad as the other.

Unfulfilled

What is the point of escape? To reach freedom where you cannot be recaptured. So the Sardis escape was unfulfilled. *"I have not found they works perfect before God"*. They weren't perfect because they hadn't come to freedom, but had only made their escape. They found Justification, but the point of being Justified is so that God can come and live in you.

Think of the analogy Brother Branham gives us of a glass. You go walking along and notice a glass on the ground, it is muddy and dirty, yet you pick it up. "A glass!" You say, "Someday I can drink water out of this glass". That is Justification, the realization of what the glass is. Then you take the glass home and you wash it. This is Sanctification. Now, if you stop there and never use the glass, what good did it do you to pick it up and wash it? The purpose was so you may drink water from it. But if you never do that, it is not perfect, its purpose is unfulfilled!



This is the point we have before us, coming out of denomination to be free in Christ was not enough. God was looking for saints with sanctified lives that He may fill with the Holy Ghost. So they can fulfill the full purpose!

Written Word vs revealed word

Brother Branham makes the statement *"Oh, they had the written Word, (but not the revealed Word)."*

Wow! Think of the difference. We know the written Word is the Bible, but because they only had a *reformation*, and not a restoration, they did not have the fully revealed Word of God. So, while they could read their Bible, their *understanding* was not complete, to know all that God wanted. But this was the start of something great that God was going to bring to a future age. God was going to send a messenger to the last age in the Spirit of Elijah. All the mystery of God was going to be finished. I will restore saith the Lord!

A little Corn Field

Another statement we want to look at in our reading today is:

"HE WAS GOING TO (ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE) TAKE THE CHURCH BACK FROM THE DEPTH OF SATAN IN THE DARK AGES TO THE DEPTH OF GOD THAT THEY HAD AT PENTECOST AND IN THE FIRST FEW YEARS OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE CHURCH."

We studied the *"depth of Satan"* in the Thyatirean Age. It was the substitution that Satan achieved by having a denominational dead church, instead of the Word of God, living in the hearts of the people. So, here we see that God wanted to take the church out of that and back into the Depth of God, God living in the hearts of the people.



How was He to achieve this? Brother Branham illustrates for us this concept with the story he tells about the corn field. This Sardis Age was a new crop of corn coming up, but there wasn't any actual corn yet.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 257 - 262

Questions

- 1) *Challenge:* What is the difference between reformation and restoration? _____

- 2) What is the reason for justification and sanctification? _____

- 3) According to promise, what is God taking the church from/to? _____

- 4) What is the meaning of "not perfect"? _____

- 5) What Doctrine did the reformation start with? _____
- 6) What does strengthen mean? _____

- 7) What does the word Sardis mean? _____
- 8) After truth became a permanent deposit, what remained to be seen? _____

- 9) "The rich Word of Truth was being heard in an _____ rather than for _____."
- 10) "*I will come as a thief*" is a message to whom? _____

Memorize: "A person that is truly baptized by the Holy Ghost into the body of Christ receiving the fullness of the Spirit will be in the WORD ALL THE WAY."

Lesson 51 - Sardis: The Eulogy (Name part 1)

*"Thou hast a few **names** even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his **name** out of the book of life, but I will confess his **name** before my Father, and before his angels." (Revelation 3:4,5)*

Two Vines

I'm sure you remember early in our study we talked about two vines or two trees that looked exactly alike. They are so close it is hard to tell apart. One is the True Church, one is the false. We have seen God praise the True Church through the previous four ages, and condemn the false church.

In this age it is slightly different. He speaks only to one church. Yet, He says there are a few names. Those names are the people who comprise the True Vine Church. God is going to reward those overcomers.

Names

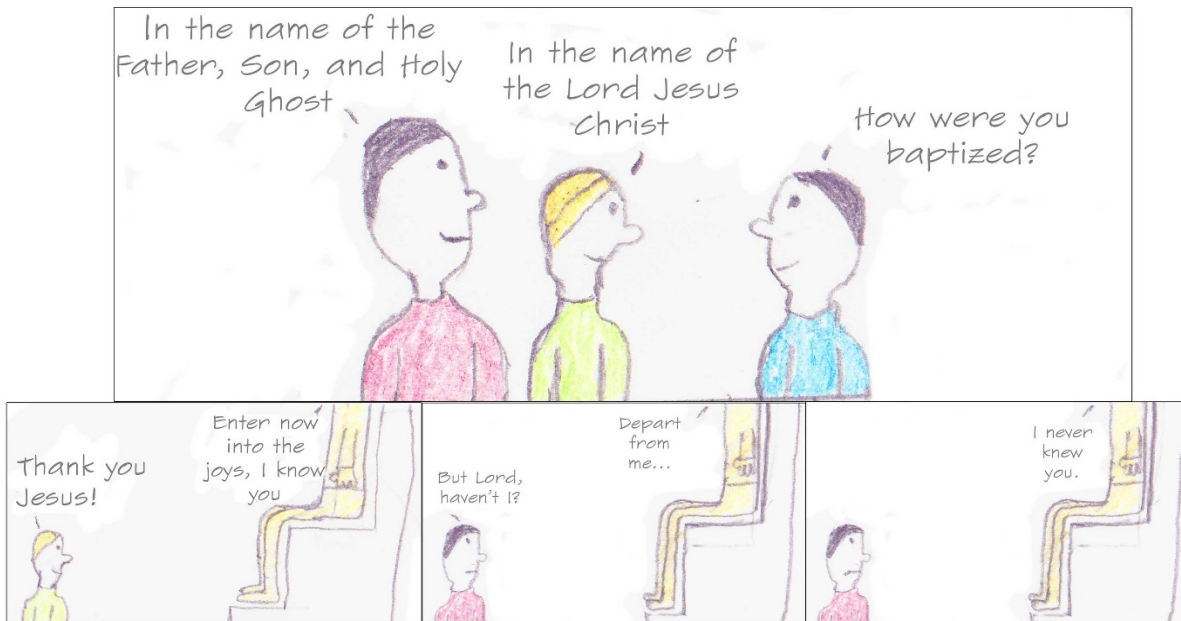
It is interesting to note here the expression God is using as He speaks to this age. He speaks of people as NAMES. This is an important thing to note for the next few lessons as we finish the Sardisean Age.

Do you want Jesus to confess YOUR name before His Father, and the angels? If so, take a look at the statement Brother Branham makes on page 264/293 p95:

"THEY HAD IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES WITH HIM ON EARTH AND NOW HE WOULD IDENTIFY HIMSELF WITH THEM IN THE NEW JERUSALEM. AND HOW MARVELOUS WILL BE THAT IDENTIFICATION!"

We have spent a lot of time in this study talking about the power of the Name of Jesus, how some of the early Ages were praised for identifying with His Name. What a wonderful reward, to know that if we identify with Him, regardless of the cost, He will identify Himself with us on that day!

This is why we begin to talk about names for the rest of the study. Have you identified with His Name? Have you taken the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ in baptism? If not, do so today! If we make HIS Name important, He will make our name important. We do not want to be among the ones whose names are blotted out of the Book of Life, or just as bad, never on it in the first place!



"They had identified themselves with Him on earth and now He would identify Himself with them..."

They are worthy

Wow! What else needs to be said, but that the righteous, worthy Judge is calling His saints worthy! That will make you happy to think about for a while!!

The Lamb's Book of Life

For the next twenty pages to complete the end of this Church Age, we will be looking at the Lamb's Book of Life, or the Book of Life.

Why are we talking about this? Because of the statement in our Scripture at the beginning of today's lesson:

*"and I will not blot out his **name** out of the book of life"*

In order for us to fully understand what this means, we have to study this throughout Scripture.

We are going to learn

- 1) When God writes, or has written the names on the Book of Life
- 2) The different groups of people this pertains to.

We will go over specific examples throughout the Scriptures for each category that we have for the Book of Life.

- 1) Those who have always had their names there, in an Eternal section, and will never be removed
- 2) Those whose names are in the Book of Life, but are not Bride, and will go into Eternal Life at the Judgment.
- 3) Those whose names will be removed, though they are religious for a time.
- 4) Those whose names were never on the Book of Life.

One of the first things we must understand is the omniscience of God. Does God know everything? If so, then He knows the end from the beginning. He ALREADY KNOWS and HAS ALWAYS known who will be saved and who will not. This is an important concept we must understand before we look at this study. We ask the following questions:

- 1) If God knows the end from the beginning, why didn't He originally place those names that will be added?
- 2) If God is omniscient, why did He ever put someone's name on the Book only to blot them out later?

Are you ready to learn these deep things?

Assignment: Reading: Pages 262 - 269

Questions

- 1) (True/False) God praised the Sardis church for not defiling their garments. _____
- 2) What is the purpose of God for us? _____
- 3) What is the reward for not defiling garments? _____
- 4) (True/False) The qualified judge meets out only punishments. _____
- 5) "You can't walk in the _____ holding hands with the _____ and then expect to be _____."
- 6) How do you make your garments white? _____
- 7) Is God presently compiling a book of names? _____

- 8) Will there be people who were not born again go in to Eternal Life? _____
- 9) Are the Lamb's Book of Life and the Book of Life the same? _____
- 10) Where is the Book located? _____
- 11) What man does Brother Branham use as an example of someone whose name was blotted out of the Book of Life? _____

Memorize: "A person that is truly baptized by the Holy Ghost into the body of Christ receiving the fullness of the Spirit will be in the WORD ALL THE WAY."

Lesson 52 - Sardis: The Eulogy (Name part 2)

*“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his **name** out of the book of life, but I will confess his **name** before my Father, and before his angels.” (Revelation 3:5)*

Removal from the Book of Life - Two Tribes of Israel

In this lesson’s reading, Brother Branham walks us through the Scriptures pertaining to two tribes of Israel that lose their rights as tribes, Dan and Ephraim.

Remember when Solomon’s son Rehoboam decided to treat the people harshly? Jeroboam took the ten northern tribes and became king over them. We find this story in 1 Kings. Since Jeroboam knew that the temple was still in Jerusalem, he was afraid to let the people that were following him go to Jerusalem (in Judah) to worship. He felt that the people would want to return to Rehoboam, if they continued to go to Jerusalem to worship. Instead, he set up two golden calves for the people to worship. One was set up in the tribe of Dan’s inheritance, in the city of Dan, and the other was set up in the tribe of Ephraim’s inheritance, in the city of Bethel.

Because of this idolatry, God wipes out those two tribes’ place under heaven. In the book of Revelation, those two tribes are not listed!

Here we begin to see the principle: you can have your name on the Book of Life, and have it blotted out. It can happen to individual names, as it did Judas, and it can happen to groups, as it did the tribes of Dan and Ephraim.



Yes, this is certainly a Biblical truth; there are those whose names are blotted out of the Book of Life.

Almost 100%

Brother Branham makes the statement, *“There are people who seem involved in the things of God almost one hundred percent. They are like Judas”*. We look at how Israel came out of Egypt, and all the things that God brought them through, yet they didn’t go all the way to the Promised Land, and they died in the wilderness.

It is SO Important for us to look at this example, and not fall after the same pattern. We must go ALL THE WAY with the Word.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 269 - 274

Questions

- 1) Which tribes are missing in Revelation 7:4-8?

- 2) In what Scripture do we find the punishment for Idolatry? _____
- 3) What was the punishment for idolatry? _____
- 4) "You can't go along with just _____, you have to take _____."
- 5) "There are people who _____ in the things of God almost _____."
- 6) Judas did exactly what Israel did at _____."
- 7) What does Brother Branham say the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost is? _____

- 8) In what way do multitudes fail? _____
- 9) How will much of the Gentile church come to have their names removed? _____

Memorize: "A person that is truly baptized by the Holy Ghost into the body of Christ receiving the fullness of the Spirit will be in the WORD ALL THE WAY."

Lesson 53 - Sardis: The Eulogy (Name part 3)

*“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his **name** out of the book of life, but I will confess his **name** before my Father, and before his angels”. (Revelation 3:5)*

Granted Eternal Life

In today’s lesson, we will read about those who are granted Eternal Life. These people are not the Bride who go up in the rapture. Yet they are a righteous group.

Consider the parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins. Five had oil and five did not. The ones with oil went into the wedding supper. This is a type of the Bride and the rapture. Think of the five without oil; it is so easy to dismiss them, but note this isn’t the parable of the five wise virgins and the five foolish hustlers! No, all ten are virgins. They are clean and pure, but only one group had oil. This shows us that there will be plenty of good people on the day of the rapture, who are not caught away with the Lord.

So what happens to these five foolish virgins then? Will they get to go to heaven? If the five wise (the Bride) have their names on the Book of Life, what about the five foolish? Where are their names? Are they blotted out? Were they never there?

Their names are on the Book of Life, but because they lacked oil, they were not counted in the rapture. They will not be in the wedding supper as we can see in Matthew 25, and they will not be in the Millennium either. They are only granted Eternal Life on the basis they were kind and helpful to the Bride.

Nicodemus and Gamaliel are in this group of people. They never were truly disciples of Jesus, but they were helpful to the disciples. They spoke up for them and tried to make life easier on them.

Four Groups

As we mentioned two lessons ago, we are learning about four groups of people:

- 1) Those who have always had their names there, in an Eternal section, and will never be removed
- 2) Those whose names are in the Book of Life, but are not Bride and will go into Eternal Life at the judgment.
- 3) Those whose names will be removed, though they are religious for a time.
- 4) Those whose names were never on the Book of Life

On page 280/315 p150 Brother Branham covers these groups. To help you pick out the groups on that page, you should underline the following *“first of all”, “Secondly”, “Thirdly”, and “Fourth and finally”*. This will help you to break these up in your mind.

Here we begin to ask and answer the question we asked in an earlier lesson -“If God knows the end from the beginning why didn’t He originally place those names that will be added?”

The truth is, this second group has ALWAYS had their names on the Book of Life, they were just not granted Eternal Life UNTIL the White Throne Judgment. God KNEW they would be granted this because He is omniscient. Their names are not added at the White Throne, but they are already there.

This is also why some names are simply not on the Book of Life. God KNEW who they were and what choices they would make. He knew they would never be granted Eternal Life, so He never placed their names there.

The hardest group to understand, when it comes to God's omniscience, are those who are blotted out. If God knew they would be blotted out, why write them on the Book at all? This question we will answer in the following lesson.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 274 - 282 , Matt 25.

Questions

- 1) Will there be any one that is righteous, that is judged at the White Throne judgment? _____
- 2) Where will the Bride be during the White Throne judgment? _____
- 3) Recalling what we learned in the last lesson, why do these righteous who are to be judged not qualify for the first resurrection? _____
- 4) Will the Bride be judged according to their works? _____
- 5) "In that day there will be those who come forth _____ and those others who are caught _____."
- 6) Those who are given Eternal Life receive it on what grounds? _____

- 7) The sheep that are allowed to go into Eternal Life are heirs to what? _____
- 8) Many will have their names blotted out because they fail to _____
_____.
- 9) Challenge Question: List Examples for each group:
 - a. Eternal Section _____
 - b. Book of Life but not Bride _____
 - c. Names Blotted out _____
 - d. Never on Book of Life _____

Memorize: "A person that is truly baptized by the Holy Ghost into the body of Christ receiving the fullness of the Spirit will be in the WORD ALL THE WAY."

Lesson 54 - Sardis: The Eulogy (Name part 4)

*“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his **name** out of the book of life, but I will confess his **name** before my Father, and before his angels.” (Revelation 3:5)*

What part of the wheat is the wheat?

We ended the last lesson with the following:

“The hardest group to understand when it comes to God’s *omniscience* are those who are blotted out. If God *knew* they would be blotted out, why write them on the book at all? This question we will answer in the following lesson.”

Brother Branham walks us through the analogy of a wheat plant. We can see the wheat plant has many parts to it in its life cycle. It starts with the blade coming out of the ground, the stalk forms and grows tall, the tassel forms on top, the husk forms and the wheat SEED forms in the husk.

What part of that is the wheat? The SEED is the only part that any of us truly care about. That’s what we grind up and make bread out of. That is the part that can be planted to grow MORE WHEAT! The rest of the plant has no value at harvest time.

Now, can the wheat SEED exist without the rest of the plant? No, the rest of the plant is a carrier and even protector, for a time of the wheat seed.

Brother Branham mentioned this while he was talking about Israel, could Joshua and Caleb have taken the whole land of Israel by themselves? No. Many died in the wilderness, but they were also there supporting Joshua and Caleb, who would one day be a part of the number that went into the Promised Land. These other children of Israel were like the stalk, or other parts of the wheat plant. They received the same blessings Joshua and Caleb did on the journey. They enjoyed all the miracles, but they did not possess the Promised Land. Yet, they were Israelites, the same as Joshua and Caleb.

This is just like the wheat plant. The whole plant is wheat. But only the seed is what makes it to the table.

How do we *KNOW* it was only for Joshua and Caleb to go into the Promised Land? Well, we know because we read it in the Bible. We see it as history, as something that has already happened. We *know*, because it is a historical fact.

Before it happened, God *KNEW* that Joshua and Caleb were the ones who would inherit the Promised Land out of their generation. God *KNEW* this by foreknowledge, because He is omnipotent and not hindered by time. Just as we *know* it by recorded history God *KNEW* it by foreknowledge.

God knew because He *knows* the outcome of any even before it even starts. We *know*, because we *remember* the outcome.

So, let's bring this back to our question. Why even put anyone on the Book at all? Well, just as the wheat SEED cannot be wheat seed without the blade, stalk, tassel, and husk, neither can the church be the church throughout time with the same kind of carrier. Some in that church God KNOWS will go on to the Promised Land. Some God KNOWS will not. Yet, they are the church.

Now can you see how important our memorization quotation for this lesson is?

We must go ALL THE WAY in the Word, or we will be counted as part of those who were in the Book of Life, but not in that Eternal section. Those whose names are there because they are part of the wheat plant, but not the seed - those names are blotted out.

Let us look at another group in this analogy. The tares. The tares don't need to be blotted out, they were never part of the wheat. They are bound and burned. So, there is no need to blot the names of those who are the tares out. They were never there.

The rest of the wheat plant, that is not the seed, is blotted out. In the harvest these parts of the plant are discarded. It was wheat, but it was not seed. It was not predestinated. It was not chosen. It was not brought into the Master's garners. It was blotted out.

Hopefully you can catch this concept. If so, it should be a little easier to understand God's foreknowledge and WHY someone can have their name on the Book of Life, yet have their name blotted out.

I'm looking forward to having MY NAME called out in the great roll call in heaven because I've taken on HIS NAME down here and I'm going ALL THE WAY in the Word.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 282 - 286

Questions

- 1) What is the end goal of planting a grain of wheat? _____

- 2) List the parts of a wheat:

- 3) "The Book of Life is the _____ wheat plant."

- 4) The Book of Eternal Life is another _____ though contained in the _____
_____.

- 5) "Everyone in the Bride is a _____ and HE loses _____."

- 6) Why is it that someone bears no fruit? _____

- 7) "Not all the wheat _____ is the wheat _____ ... All the _____ is not _____ and neither is it all given _____."

- 8) "The Great Shepherd is calling His sheep by _____."

- 9) What are the two roll calls?

Memorize: "A person that is truly baptized by the Holy Ghost into the body of Christ receiving the fullness of the Spirit will be in the WORD ALL THE WAY."

Congratulations! You finished Chapter 7!

Lesson 55 - Philadelphia: The Sixth Church Age

But first, review!

List the first five Church Ages and the messengers in order. You should be in process of memorizing the age and Messengers. Special bonus points to those who memorize the years too!

Age	Messenger	Years

The City

If you remember from the last chapter, Sardis was marked by the characteristic of the worship of Cybele. This was because the characteristic of that age was worship of the Jezebel system. We also understand that once Martin Luther protested the Catholic Church, there were other groups that began to break off from the Catholic, or even the Lutheran movement. In Philadelphia, as we have been saying all along, that Jezebel system (the Catholic Church) had daughters. Just as Jezebel had Athaliah, so did the Catholic Church have other daughter Churches by new names. These all began to spring up in the previous (Sardisean) age.

A defining characteristic of the Philadelphian Age, that Brother Branham points us to, is the coins in Philadelphia, bearing the image of Bacchus on one side, and the priestess on the other. He shows us the repetition we are seeing on the devil's side over and over again. The god and a woman. This makes sense to us, as we know Bacchus is the same as Nimrod, and we remember from past lessons that Nimrod started the whole religion of the god with the wife/mother.

What is different in this age, is now there are many churches. It is no longer merely the Catholic Church, there are other denominational churches, but they are the same thing. There was more than one coin made with the image of Bacchus and the priestess; there are many coins made, or "*minted*" the exact same way.



Coin with the image of Bacchus

Jezebel had a daughter that was just like her. The Catholic Church had daughters exactly like her. One mold for a coin was made, and many were minted after it. The coin was a characteristic of the age.

The Messenger.

John Wesley is the messenger to the Philadelphian Church Age. Did you know that many men disagreed with John Wesley? They even made fun of him? Neither did I. Here is something we ought to remember:

“Many books of his... was wrote of slander about him in his day, slandering him, making fun of him. But they've long been forgotten now, so has their authors. You can't do nothing against a child of God and get by with it, you just--you just fighting the air. God is going to take them right on through, anyhow.”

(60-1210 The Philadelphia Church Age)

This is a timeless truth that we would do well to remember for our own age.

The denomination that followed and organized behind John Wesley was called “*Methodist*”. This denomination continues on today. The reason it is called Methodist, was because John Wesley used a guide of works that he believed should or should not be done. These were called “*methods*”. They had methods of living clean, sanctified lives, full of good works.

As you read this lesson, you should consider if John Wesley’s “*methods*” were a good thing or not. Is it good to do good works? You should ponder the difference between faith and works as you read James chapter 1 and 2. Here’s another quote to consider:

“And the whole armor of God is faith, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, meekness, gentleness, patience. The whole armor of the believer is faith. We believe God by faith, because, God said so. Then what is it? Abraham was justified, by Paul, by faith; but, by James, by works. Abraham was talking what God saw, and James was talking what man saw. "Show me your faith by your works," "without your works," and so forth. See? Then if you don't have works with your faith, it shows you haven't got faith, you're just talking from your mouth. But if you really got faith, you believe it and act like it. That's right, put it in action!”

(62-0218 Perseverance)

Assignment: Reading: Pages 287 – 290 James 1,2

Questions

- 1) "Bacchus is the same as _____."
- 2) "Philadelphia means, _____."
- 3) John Wesley was born in what year? _____
- 4) (True/False) John Wesley's mission trip to Georgia was a success. _____
- 5) John Wesley's meetings saw the _____ of Spiritual _____.
- 6) What was the condition with which to enter the United Society? _____

- 7) What was Wesley's favorite saying on money? _____

- 8) Upon what grounds would Wesley NOT want to separate from brethren? _____

Memorize: *"There isn't anything in this life, satisfying as it may be, as good and as fine as it may be, but you will find the sum total of all perfection in Christ. Everything fades into insignificance beside Him."*

Lesson 56 - Philadelphia: The Salutation

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He That is holy, He That is true, He That hath the key of David, He That openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;" (Revelation 3:7)

Holiness: He that is Holy

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:" (Hebrews 12:14)

Do you follow after holiness? John Wesley did. The reason we have a "Methodist" church today is because John Wesley, and his followers, had a set of "methods" that they used to live a holy and righteous life. Brother Branham tells us

"Then God raised up John Wesley, with sanctification, the message of the second work of grace, and it was a wonderful thing."

(65-0123 Broken Cisterns)

So, after Luther came, in the previous age, and preached *Justification* by faith, Wesley came and preached that we should live holy, clean lives – *sanctification*!

Looking at Wesley's life, we know he lived a clean life. Do you remember, from the reading in the last lesson, that Wesley had a failed mission trip to Georgia? After he felt he needed to be saved, his own brother was indignant. His brother felt that he was a Christian and doing all these wonderful things for God, how could he not be saved? Wesley had a revelation of what salvation and sanctification were. He began to understand that holiness was of the Lord. Once he was saved by FAITH and NOT by his WORKS, then he was able to do things for the Lord! No longer were his mission trips failures, like the previous one in Georgia, but God used him mightily as the messenger to the Philadelphian Age.

So, we begin to understand the truth of works, as John Wesley did. "*He that is Holy*". Holiness is of the Lord. We do not produce holiness of ourselves, but God can work holiness in us. We must not forget that He is the Holy One. He is the SOURCE of our holiness.

So, while our good works, clean living, and righteousness are wonderful things, John Wesley had all those things and still said he was not converted. Here is where we find what Brother Branham is telling us about this Scripture. The Jews had all these works, sacrifices, etc. Yet, when "*He that is Holy*" came, they rejected Him. Similarly, the modern denominations of our day, which started in the Philadelphian Church Age, have works, build hospitals, schools, drive through prayers, and food pantries which are fine things, but they have rejected "*He that is Holy*" for their own works.

We believe in *sanctification*. We believe in living a holy life, but as Brother Branham tells us in the quote above, sanctification is the second work of grace. It is God working in you, and not merely you working to please God of your own strength.

Finally, we see the Scripture in Revelation Brother Branham refers to, “*And he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still*” (Revelation 22:11). When that day comes, where will you remain? Find the SOURCE today – He that is HOLY.

He that is True

Here we start to talk about “*Partial Realization*” and “*Perfect Realization*”. It is beautiful language Brother Branham uses. On that point, Brother Branham has some beautiful statements in this chapter. We will continue to memorize one of them throughout the lessons in the chapter.

Think of *Partial Realization* as a type. Let’s look at the type of Manna. Manna was bread sent from Heaven to the children of Israel. Similarly, when Jesus walked the earth, and the miracle of the loaves and fishes happened, many wanted Jesus to continue to provide them bread, but Jesus said I AM the bread. What did He mean?

Manna and the bread that Jesus fed the five thousand with were a “*Partial Realization*” of a truth God was trying to get to the people. It showed there was something real to come. That something real, was Jesus. When we partake of HIM (spiritually speaking) we no longer hunger (spiritually speaking). While this may seem “*less real*” to us when we’re physically hungry - the spiritual application is more important! The “*Perfect Realization*” of the truth is that God satisfies our EVERY need. Hunger, thirst, desires of any kind, God is sufficient. He is EVERYTHING. I hope you can understand this truth.

So, eating manna or bread truly can satisfy a hunger in our bellies for a day, but feasting on the Word of God can satisfy everything in our lives for eternity. So Jesus is, “He that is true”. He is the fulfillment of what God was showing us by providing manna to the Israelites. He is the “*Perfect Realization*”.

Holiness and Truth

We should apply what we have learned in this lesson to our lives. We find that He is holy and He is true. Without HIM we can do nothing. We could create our own holy living, but will that be true and holy? Said another way, will it be true holiness? No, it cannot be. We must have the HOLY ONE to be holy. So we learn that “*Salvation is not Jesus Plus*”. Jesus isn’t a 5-hour energy drink that boosts our own salvation and holiness for a while. Salvation is JESUS ALONE. Jesus is “*He that is Holy*”. Jesus is “*He that is True*”. We must have HIM in our lives, and He is the perfect realization of all that we have or need. THEN we are able to do something for Him, but only after we accept the Holy One. The Jews during the time of Christ proved this. For all their good deeds, they did not accept the Holy One. They were of their father the devil. So too, in our day, many good deeds are done, by those who reject Him. They are of their father the devil as well. Accept the Holy One today!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 291 – 294

Questions

- 1) "By the law can no flesh be _____ . By the law can no man be made _____ .
_____ is of the Lord."
- 2) In the Philadelphian Age they were taking refuge in the _____ .
- 3) "The Life is not in the _____ . The Life is in _____ ."
- 4) "'True' expresses the _____ of an idea
as contrasted with its _____ ."
- 5) What examples are given of things where Jesus is the "True" or Perfect Realization?

- 6) "It is not even _____ and _____
it is _____ alone."

Memorize: *"There isn't anything in this life, satisfying as it may be, as good and as fine as it may be, but you will find the sum total of all perfection in Christ. Everything fades into insignificance beside Him."*

Lesson 57 - Philadelphia: The Salutation, The Key and the Door

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He That is holy, He That is true, He That hath the key of David, He That openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;" (Revelation 3:7)

The KEY

As we mentioned in the first chapter, (going way back!) Revelation is a book of symbols. It takes a prophet to reveal to us those symbols. In this lesson and throughout this chapter we look at two symbols: the *key*, and the *door*. Verse 8 talks about the *Open Door*, but in verse 7 we see the *key*, and we see that God opens and shuts. What is it that He opens and shuts? A door.

In today's lesson we talk about the *key*, but don't forget that we usually think of a *key* for a *door*. One of the things Brother Branham does for us in the Church Age Book is find related Scriptures for us. Let's look at Isaiah: 22:22

"And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open."

Notice how closely these two verses mirror each other. (Revelation 3:7 at the top of this page and Isaiah 22). The *Key of David*, opening and shutting.

The verse in Isaiah gives us more information about this *key* and, specifically, where this *key* is. The *key* is on *His shoulder*. I bet that's where you carry your keys around! No, I guess not. What an odd picture, the *key of David* on His shoulder. Now, obviously we know this is Christ speaking in Revelation and the verse in Isaiah is a prophecy about Christ, so the *key* is on the shoulder of Christ. What does that tell us?

Looking at Isaiah 9:6 we see:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Now, you and I would immediate think that "*the government shall be upon his shoulder*" would mean political government, but Brother Branham shows us, this is a love story. He takes us to the wedding ceremony of the East and shows us how the bride puts her veil on the shoulder of the groom to show that he is now her head. She will be under his responsibility (government). He accepts the responsibility to care and provide for the bride. No one else was given that responsibility and no one else should take that responsibility but the groom.



SHE BELONGS TO HIM AND TO HIM ALONE. SHE IS WHOLLY COMMITTED TO HIM AND HE ACCEPTS THE OBLIGATION. HE IS HER HEAD, FOR CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF HIS CHURCH. AS SARAH CALLED ABRAHAM, LORD, EVEN SO THE BRIDE IS HAPPY THAT HE IS HER LORD. HE SPEAKS AND SHE OBEYS FOR THAT IS HER DELIGHT. (PAGE 296/335 P40)

So it is CHRIST that has that *key*. It is He that is our head, not any other man, and certainly not a church. Many denominations now claim to be able to open the door to you, or close it.

Remember what happened in the last age? Luther protested the Catholic Church and that gave rise to many others to break free of the Catholic bondage. Not all that break free stay free though. Many began to take the traditions they knew from the Catholic Church and organize other "*reformed*" churches. What did that give us? More denominations. Same mother church, different daughter churches.

Now we see in this age that Christ is saying, that HE has the *Key of David*. Not these churches! HE is the one that loves to take responsibility for you. He alone opens the door. He is your head, and you should *esteem Him so much*, that it is your DELIGHT to obey Him.

The Key of DAVID

That it is the *Key of DAVID* has meaning for us as well. Because it is the *Key of David* it speaks to the coming millennium. Christ being the King on the throne. Christ in the honeymoon with His Bride that has put Her veil on His shoulder. It is Christ that takes us there; it is Christ that is there with us. What a love story! Brother Branham beautifully writes:

Yes, and there He stands, "Jesus, Perfect Everything,"

So in contrast to the Jews we'll read about in verse 9, Jesus is Holy, Jesus is True, Jesus has the *Key of David* – He is perfect everything. To be a Christian does not mean you are a church goer, but it means you have accepted HIM as your head and live according to His Word.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 294 – 298, Genesis 7

Questions

- 1) What is strange about where the key of the House of David is? _____

- 2) What does the shoulder signify? _____

- 3) The Bride is wholly _____ to Him and He accepts the _____.
- 4) "He _____ and she _____ for that is her delight."
- 5) What has the church been governed by in every age? _____

- 6) "The key of David signifies that it is _____"

- 7) "There He stands, _____ Perfect _____
In Him is Perfect _____."
- 8) When God proves Himself to the world who will all the world bow at the feet of? _____

- 9) As the world bows (question 8) what will this prove? _____

Memorize: *"There isn't anything in this life, satisfying as it may be, as good and as fine as it may be, but you will find the sum total of all perfection in Christ. Everything fades into insignificance beside Him."*

Lesson 58 - Philadelphia: Age of the OPEN DOOR

"I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My Name." (Revelation 3:8)

The Open Door: Mission Age

"They opened up many doors during that age: the door to the Gospel, the door to the mission fields, the--the--the door back to Christ, and everything was opened up during that age. And you can see what they did, the brethren done a great job out of it."

(60-1210 The Philadelphian Church Age)

There are a few ways we can look at this Open Door. The first one we want to look at is the great missionary age that went on during the Philadelphian Church Age. It was the *"Greatest spreading of the Gospel that the world has ever seen."*¹ Many great men of God spread the Gospel through this Age. This was the time of the *"Great Awakening"* where men like Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Finney, and William Carey preached the gospel with power. Philadelphia means *"Brotherly Love"*. This was the age that men loved their brethren enough, so they went throughout the world telling them of Christ.

Where once the Catholic Church was all men knew of *"Christianity"*, Luther in his Age began to break that door down, and it was flung wide open by the time of John Wesley. No longer did the political powers have to restrict this kind of thing, because the Catholic Church didn't like it. That yoke had broken and men had the freedom to preach Christ.

How should the Gospel be preached? Brother Branham tells us of his trip to South Africa. He tells us how he told the people that Christ promised He would be in His church doing the same works that He did. Then He SHOWED them, and many were saved. He contrasts this with the young missionaries from Kentucky that he met up with. They were *preaching* the Gospel, but they were not *demonstrating* the Gospel. Amazing the difference between the two ministries, both of them from Kentucky!

Christ is the Door – The Lapover

Perhaps one of the more confusing things in this section is understanding what Brother Branham is saying about the *Lapover*. What we will learn as we read in this lesson and the next is that God set an Open Door between these two ages. This is right after Philadelphia, and right before the Laodicean Age.

We know and will read that Jesus is the *door*. Brother Branham tells of the shepherd that lays down as a door in front of the sheep pen. No one comes in or goes out except they go through the shepherd. Jesus is that *door*! So what is it that is set before the church? The *Open Door* of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. We now can know Who He is again. The Philadelphia believers had a few things going for them. They had a little strength, hadn't denied His Name, and had kept His Word – this was the Revelation of the Deity of Jesus Christ.

Christ is the *Door*! The Revelation of His Deity is there before us. Can you get revelation on your own? Can any man give it to you? If you have it, can anyone take it away? No, No, No. Only God can give you revelation. Only God can...OPEN THAT DOOR. The revelation of Who He is, and His NAME is so important.

We've talked about the importance of His Name in every chapter of this book. These Philadelphian believers didn't deny His Name. During the *Lapover*, or between the Philadelphian Age and Laodicean Age, came the time where baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ returned to the church. The *door* for this revelation was open, and men were free to walk through it. They had that little strength, and it was enough to get them through the door.

From the sermon Brother Branham preached for this Age he says:

"Now, now we find out that He said, "I set before you an open door." And I don't care how many man-made organizations comes up, or denominations, even the gates of hell can't shut it. Only one way to beat it, join it. That's all. You can't join it, so you have to be born into it. Right. So there's nobody could ever stop that Message of supreme Deity and the baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ. The gates of hell will never prevail against it."

(60-1210 The Philadelphian Church Age)

Nothing can prevail against it! This reminds me of what we have read way back in the Church Age Book, pages 15 and 16/6p17.

"NOW REMEMBER THIS. CHRIST IN THE TRUE CHURCH IS A CONTINUATION OF THE BOOK OF ACTS. BUT THE BOOK OF REVELATION SHOWS HOW THAT THE ANTICHRIST SPIRIT WOULD COME INTO THE CHURCH AND DEFILE IT, MAKING IT LUKEWARM, FORMAL AND POWERLESS. IT EXPOSES SATAN, REVEALING HIS WORKS (ATTEMPTED DESTRUCTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE AND THE DISCREDITING OF GOD'S WORD) RIGHT DOWN TO THE TIME HE IS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. HE FIGHTS THAT. HE CANNOT STAND IT. HE KNOWS THAT IF THE PEOPLE GET THE TRUE REVELATION OF THE TRUE CHURCH AND WHAT SHE IS, WHAT SHE STANDS FOR AND THAT SHE CAN DO THE GREATER WORKS, SHE WILL BE AN INVINCIBLE ARMY. IF THEY GET A TRUE REVELATION OF THE TWO SPIRITS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, AND BY GOD'S SPIRIT DISCERN AND WITHSTAND THE ANTICHRIST SPIRIT, SATAN WILL BE POWERLESS BEFORE HER. HE WILL BE AS DEFINITELY THWARTED TODAY AS WHEN CHRIST WITHSTOOD HIS EVERY EFFORT TO GAIN POWER OVER HIM IN THE DESERT. YES, SATAN HATES REVELATION. BUT WE LOVE IT. WITH TRUE REVELATION IN OUR LIVES, THE GATES OF HELL CANNOT PREVAIL AGAINST US, BUT WE WILL PREVAIL OVER THEM."

Assignment: Reading: Pages 298 – 305

Questions

- 1) In the last age there will be all the evil of _____ and yet the reality of _____.
- 2) The open door signifies the tremendous _____.
- 3) What age was the open door for the false vine? _____
- 4) The fifth age set the stage for a mighty move of the Word of the Lord with what? _____
- 5) Jesus told them to _____ -- stick with _____ --- and _____.
- 6) “The _____ is the real way of the _____.”
- 7) “This same Jesus was a _____ and that He would _____ down through the ages.”
- 8) “Did they tell you that because of that _____ in them that was in Jesus that they would be able to do _____ even as Jesus did?”
- 9) “God never told a man to _____ and _____ He gave us the open door of _____ and that is what we are supposed to use.”
- 10) How should the Gospel be preached? _____
- 11) Why are people not seeing the results that Jesus said we should see? _____

¹ Page 299/339 p55

Memorize: “There isn't anything in this life, satisfying as it may be, as good and as fine as it may be, but you will find the sum total of all perfection in Christ. Everything fades into insignificance beside Him.”

Lesson 59 - Philadelphia: Judgment of the False Jew

"I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My Name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." (Revelation 3:8,9)

A Principle of Satan

We learn today about a principle of Satan:

"THAT PRINCIPLE IS TO ORGANIZE AND CLAIM ORIGINALITY AND THEREFORE BE ENTITLED TO SPECIAL RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES."

Just as we learned as we studied the second age, the devil began to try to make it look like the *false church* was the *True Church*. Remember how the first church of Rome started, but Junius and Andronicus had to leave when the Jews were expelled? Then, that first church in Rome began to allow their former idolatrous traditions to mix with the truth. When Junius and Andronicus came back, they found the first church wasn't Christian any more. Remember how we learned that even though that first church wasn't Christian anymore, they still kept the name, as if they were?

This began to happen again soon after Luther's time in the Sardisean Age. This principle would continue through every church movement throughout history. Satan would organize it, so that it was no longer following the Holy Spirit as its head (remember the key on the shoulder?). The church would die, the people would not even be Christians, but they still kept the name.

They still said they were Christians, but they were not.

The synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not.

You see the parallel?

Let's look at the Scripture in the second Church Age again.

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." (Revelation 2:9)

So this is Satan's tactic. Let people think they are Christians when they are not. Let them go to church and call themselves Christians!

“But, now, the cunningness of the devil now, makes the people believe that they are a Christian when they're not. There is the thing. You don't have to seal... It's--it's a more cunning day than it would be, than when you had to seal your--your life away with your testimony. The devil has set every cunning trap that he can, to... He's a deceiver. And Jesus told us, in Matthew 24, how this day would be that we're living in, the most deceitful day that ever lived, 'so close that it would deceive the very Elected of God if it were possible for him to deceive.'”

(65-0829 Satan's Eden)

You see, the devil WANTS people to believe and say they are Christians.

“‘Hold fast,’ that don't mean just keep testifying. If you don't live the life, you don't hold it fast; you're living a hypocritical thing. You're... You better be on out and just say you're a sinner and forget about it. Don't profess a Christian, live something else; you're the biggest stumbling block the world has ever had. If you're a sinner, admit it and, go on, get right with God. If you're a Christian, hold fast your confession, stay there.”

(57-0901e Hebrews Chapter Four)

So, how is a Jew a real Jew and not a liar? Aren't Jews BORN Jews? How can you say you are a Jew and not be one? Here we find it is not their physical birth status that is being looked at, but their Spiritual birth! The Spirit of God in the heart:

“But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” (Romans 2:29)

It is the same for Christians. To be born again, and filled with the baptism of the Holy Ghost is what makes you a Christian. NOT because you have joined a church, hang out with Christians, go to the youth/church activities, and/or call yourself a Christian.

Don't be weary in well doing though, my friend. If you are a real true Christian, you have a reward coming that will outweigh any burden, or trial faced on this earth. If others who say they are Christians mock you for your faith, for your standards of holiness, for any part of the Word they do not agree with, do not despair! One day those that SAY they are Christians, but are not, will come and bow before YOUR feet¹. God will show THEM, that HE has loved YOU!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 306 – 312

Questions

- 1) What did God raise up to contrast the free thinker, communism, and liberal theologians? _____

What did they do? _____

- 2) What principle of Satan does Brother Branham mention? _____

- 3) “The spirit that was in _____ went right along through the _____.”
- 4) “Judas’ spirit never got to _____.”
- 5) “These folks say they _____ but they _____.”
- 6) In the last days how will power be gained to rule the world? _____

¹ CAB Page 298/337 p50

Memorize: *“There isn't anything in this life, satisfying as it may be, as good and as fine as it may be, but you will find the sum total of all perfection in Christ. Everything fades into insignificance beside Him.”*

Lesson 60 - Philadelphia: Eulogy and Promise

"Because thou has kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." (Revelation 3:10)

Patience

"In your patience possess ye your souls." (Luke 21:19)

Do you ever find yourself being impatient? One of the classic examples these days is texting. Do you ever text a friend, and then find yourself getting annoyed when they take more than one minute to respond?

Why do you think that happens?

It is because you become used to having responses very quickly, and when it doesn't happen, you lose patience and become annoyed. Prior to cellphones, we used to leave a message on an answering machine and just wait to receive a call back. We had more patience in those days because we were not so accustomed to having responses right away.

God is not like our texting friends! God TEACHES us patience, at times, by delaying His answers. He will not allow us to become impatient whining children. "But God, I want it NOW!" is not something He longs to hear us say. He wants us to rest in His provision, and in His timing. As we learned in an earlier lesson, we must have Character to reign with Christ. Patience is part of that Character we must have.

God has promised us many things, but we must have patience to wait and rely on Him. When our patience is tried and tested it is never fun, but it is God's process of teaching us. Do not worry, the promise will be fulfilled, it just may not be fulfilled NOW.

Not only should we have the kind of patience that teaches us to wait, but we also must have the kind of patience that endures through hard times.

Serve God Publically?

Do you have a desire to serve God? I hope that you do. Because of what God has done for us, many of us feel very strongly about serving Him, about giving back to Him, shining His light, showing forth His Glory, and working until He comes. We should desire to serve Him.

Yet, this can even be a struggle for us. Many times we have the temptation of doing it ourselves. Brother Branham even preached a sermon, *"Trying to do God a service without it being His will"*. Sometimes our desire to serve Him, no matter the cost, gets in the way of actually just waiting on Him, for what He wants done!

Imagine you want to do something to make your dad happy. So you mow the lawn. What you didn't know is he had the fertilizer company come out earlier that day and the lawn shouldn't have been mowed for 48 hours. It was a good thing you did and for the right reason, but because you didn't do it according to your father's plan, it ended up being a bad thing.

Sometimes this happens with us and God as well. Sometimes we even begin to find our sense of personal worth in what we do for God. This is a problem that we will see develop as the end draws near.

In this lesson's reading, you will read of how the world's financial systems will bring everyone into a unity. It will seem like the only way to serve Him is through the religious system that has been created. The question will be left to you. How will you serve God? How will you do anything for Him? You may be tempted to, "*serve God in the framework of this organization*", otherwise you will feel you are not actually serving Him.

There is a key word in the first paragraph on page 314/356 p130. That keyword is "*publically*". Our service to God isn't ALWAYS public. Our quiet time of prayer, our holy life, and our consecration to God are all ways we serve Him. Consider the following quotation:

"All right, here was "voices." Oh, how we need in Jeffersonville thousands of lived voices, the thunder of God thundering out in sweetness and holiness, purity, undefiled lives, walking around in the earth today, without a blemish. Yes, sir, real Christians, that's thunder against the enemy. The Devil don't care how loud you can holler; the Devil don't care how much you can jump or how much you can do this or shout. But what hurts the Devil is to see that sanctified, holy life consecrated to God; say anything to him, call him anything, just as sweet as it can be and move right on. Oh, my! That throws him away, that's the thunder that shakes the Devil."

(61-0108 Revelation, Chapter Four #3)

You see? We can serve God in our private lives. Sometimes that is all that need be done.*

*Now, don't use this as an excuse to be lazy! Have a proper balance! Serve God publically as long as you are free to do so!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 312 – 314, Luke 21

Questions

- 1) What is required to wait for the fulfillment of the Word? _____
- 2) If God fulfilled every request immediately what would happen to you? _____

- 3) *Challenge:* Do you think people are more or less patient now or back in the Philadelphian Age? _____
_____ Why? (Give Examples) _____

- 4) When was Abraham tried? _____
- 5) “But from the time we _____ until the time we get the _____ we must learn to receive _____ into our souls for only in _____ do we possess _____.”
- 6) Does it take patience to live the Word? _____
- 7) Is it better to serve God publically within an organization than to not serve Him publically at all?

- 8) What is the key word that makes a difference in our understanding in question 7? _____

Memorize: *“There isn't anything in this life, satisfying as it may be, as good and as fine as it may be, but you will find the sum total of all perfection in Christ. Everything fades into insignificance beside Him.”*

Lesson 61 - Philadelphia: Promise and Admonition

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: I will write upon him My new Name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." (Revelation 3:11-13)

Crown & Perseverance

You're going to reign with Him one day. Hold fast, because you're getting a crown. YOU are GOING TO REIGN with Him. Stop. Take a moment. Let that sink in. You'll be royalty with Him.

So hold fast!! Don't give up! Keep pressing the fight.

"PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD--USE EVERY WEAPON HE HAS GIVEN US--USE EVERY GIFT AT OUR DISPOSAL AND LOOK AHEAD WITH JOY" (CAB PAGE 315/357 P134)

Look at all that God has given you for this journey and this battle. He's given you shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit. He's given us speaking in tongues and prophecies. He's given us apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Use EVERY gift at your disposal. Use EVERYTHING He has given you to hold fast in this day. Look ahead with joy – because He's coming to give you a crown,

and you. are. going. to. reign.

Pillar

You are a pillar in the temple. What does that mean? Brother Branham tells us plainly, we are part of the foundation, because we have been given the same revelation as the apostles and prophets. He has given you the same revelation as Paul, as Moses, and Elijah. He uses us all differently in different ways, but the same revelation they had – He has given to you. You are part of the same foundation. You are a pillar.

Overcomer

Brother Branham tells us to ponder the word *overcomer* for a moment. He wants us to stop and consider this. Who is the overcomer? How do we know we have overcome? What is the answer? Those who have been baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They have overcome the false religion of the day. The Trinitarian doctrine that grips so many Christians – these believers have overcome!

Name of My God

Appropriately, these overcomers then have the promise here that He will write upon the overcomer the Name of my God. Again we see the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ lifted up and exalted in the Scripture. There is no other Name by which man should be saved, there is no other Name we should be baptized in, but the Name of Jesus Christ. You are blessed by the Lord, because He is writing His Name upon you, the overcomer.

What a privilege to be identified by that name!

By the end of this study, you should never forget that the Name of Jesus is so very important to the believer. It was the Name God chose for His Son.

Then we notice there is a new Name coming. What is THAT new Name? Surely it will be important and we must know it! If God's current Name is so important, then the new Name is, and we had better pay attention.

We need to be careful here, however. Many have tried through conjecture to figure out what that new Name is. Many have studied, debated, and started all kinds of doctrines around things like this. Brother Branham tells us plainly

“WHAT THAT NAME IS, NONE DARE CONJECTURE. IT WOULD HAVE TO BE A REVELATION OF THE SPIRIT GIVEN SO CONCLUSIVELY THAT NONE WOULD DARE DENY IT. BUT NO DOUBT HE WILL LEAVE THAT REVELATION TO THE DAY WHEN HE DESIRES TO GIVE THAT NAME FORTH. SUFFICE IT TO KNOW THAT IT WILL BE MORE WONDERFUL THAN WE COULD EVER IMAGINE.”

Similarly, we learned the same kind of thing from pages 211 and 212/233p255 of the Church Age Book. At the end of the Pergamean age, the new Name was mentioned. Brother Branham tells us

“HE KNOWS THE NAME, BUT WE DO NOT. ONE DAY AT HIS GOOD PLEASURE, WE WILL KNOW ALSO.”

For now, spend your time enjoying the Name of Jesus Christ. Focus on Him. At His good pleasure, we will know, because the husband doesn't keep secrets from His Bride. Truly, what rewards are promised for the ones that He loves!

Urgency

While this may seem small, do not forget or pass quickly over the admonition at the end of this chapter. We must HEAR what the Spirit is saying! We ask why the urgency in the Philadelphian Age – but we must understand the Laodicean Age will be short! Do not get so caught up in the cares of this life that you miss your daily continual communion with Him! Listen to His Voice!

“OH, THERE ARE SO MANY VOICES IN THE WORLD--SO MANY PROBLEMS AND NEEDS CRYING FOR ATTENTION; BUT THERE WILL NEVER BE A VOICE SO IMPORTANT AND SO WORTH ATTENDING AS THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT.”

Assignment: Reading: Pages 314 – 318

Questions

- 1) Jesus will come in the midst of a time of _____.
- 2) Who are the ones who will sit in His throne & share in His Kingdom? _____

- 3) What is the word for us all at this time? _____
- 4) What is the pillar a part of? _____
- 5) What is God giving you when He makes you a pillar? _____

- 6) John asks, "Who is he that overcometh?" What is the answer? _____

- 7) The Lamb & His bride will be settled in what? _____
- 8) How much of the perfections of God will we know about until the resurrection? _____

- 9) "What that name is, none dare _____."
- 10) Every age ends with a _____. It is a _____
to listen to the _____.
- 11) Why is His plea more urgent in this age? _____

- 12) There are so many _____ and _____ crying for
_____ but there will never be a _____ so important and so
worth attending as the _____.

Memorize: "There isn't anything in this life, satisfying as it may be, as good and as fine as it may be, but you will find the sum total of all perfection in Christ. Everything fades into insignificance beside Him."

Congratulations! You finished Chapter 8!

Lesson 62 - Laodicea: The Seventh Church Age

Review Time!

List the first six Church Ages and the messengers in order. You should be in the process of memorizing the ages and messengers. Special bonus points to those who memorize the years too!

Age	Messenger	Years

The City and Age

As it is the first lesson in the chapter, it always serves us well to review. You may think review is boring, but if this course, through a multitude of repetition, causes you to never forget a few key things, then it has done what it was intended to do!

By now, you should know why each of the seven cities were chosen. Right? They were chosen for the characteristics that were found in them. Those characteristics matched what was going on in the age for which they were chosen to represent.

Do you know what years the Laodicean Age encompasses? 1906 to *present!* This is it. This is the last age. There are no more Ages talked about in the Bible. That means that the Laodicean Age is the age YOU LIVE IN RIGHT NOW! As we have said before, this isn't just a story, this is history and history was present day – yesterday, (or a few yesterday's ago).

So, we find Laodicea's characteristics of people's rights and equality match exactly the Laodicean Age – the age that WE live in. Perhaps you don't follow the political scene much, but in our day today there is a great push for equality and people's rights. It doesn't matter your color of skin, your religion, or even if you think you are something you aren't, our politics today try to make everything equal. No matter how preposterous it is. Truly, we do live in an age of "*people's rights*"

Stop and think for a moment about people's rights, one world government, and unity of religions. Where is that a good thing? Where is it not good? Many times things SOUND GOOD, but in reality can never be achieved without completely destroying what they are. Can a religion that seeks peace be one with a religion that seeks

violence? How could those two things ever be one? Only by destroying what they stand for in the first place can they ever have unity.

This was Laodicea, this is our age. A destruction of everything, so that value may be placed only upon supposed rights and equality.

The Seven Visions

You are probably very aware of the seven visions Brother Branham had in 1933. He told about them all through his ministry. He lists them in this section of the book. All these visions were for OUR time. They are things that we can see happening and know that they were prophesied about before they happened.

We see plainly the visions of Hitler and Mussolini fulfilled. As this lesson is being drafted, the United States are one week away from an election with a major party candidate being a woman. (Hillary Clinton). Brother Branham never said specifically it would be a woman president and she may not be elected, but it certainly is worth remembering Brother Branham prophesied about “a woman rising in great power in America”.

Read through the visions in this lesson’s reading. Many are so obvious to see, to us, but try to think of what it was like in 1933. That was eight years before World War II, Hitler was only just becoming powerful in Germany, women had been voting in the United States for only thirteen years at this point, and women wore skirts and dresses as a matter of normal fashion. To have seen these things, and prophesied about them, would have been very strange to the people he was telling these visions.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 319 – 323 Matthew 13:1-30

Questions

- 1) What does Laodicea mean? _____
- 2) Who was the worshipped deity of Laodicea? _____
- 3) What else does Laodicea mean? _____
- 4) To what parable does Brother Branham refer to church and state or religion and politics being together?

- 5) What three things that we have today did Laodicea have?

- 6) Faith has superseded science making man a victim of what? _____
- 7) *Challenge:* What is the difference between prediction and prophecy? _____

- 8) List the seven visions Brother Branham had
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
 6. _____
 7. _____
- 9) *Challenge:* Why do you think these visions are listed in the section titled “*The Laodicean Age*”? _____

Memorize: “Now this messenger of Malachi 4 and Revelation 10:7 is going to do two things. One: According to Malachi 4 he will turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. Two: He will reveal the mysteries of the seven thunders in Revelation 10 which are the revelations contained in the seven seals. It will be these Divinely revealed 'mystery-truths' that literally turn the hearts of the children to the Pentecostal fathers. Exactly so.”

Lesson 63 - Laodicea: Earthquake Study

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write:" (Revelation 3:14a)

The City of Laodicea: Earthquakes

The city of Laodicea was destroyed, or nearly destroyed, by earthquakes multiple times. At the left here you see a picture of Laodicean ruins. Of course, many of these columns may have fallen for multiple reasons. The fact



remains that in A.D. 60, there was a major earthquake that destroyed Laodicea, and in the ruins today, it appears the aqueduct (water supply to the city) was destroyed by an earthquake.

How fitting then to discuss earthquakes as we read this chapter. Brother Branham tells us that God in judgment will shake this earth again according to Haggai 2:6,7 and Hebrews 12:26,27.

"For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I

will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts." (Haggai 2:6,7)

Brother Branham told us that the Alaskan earthquake in 1964 was "Judgment striking the west coast" and that "God was warning by a world tremor what He will do soon on a greater scale".

Alaskan Earthquake

"For instance, the great earthquake in Alaska. Never has been an earthquake like that, in all the world. Did you notice? It come on Good Friday. You know, the last time the world was shaken was on Good Friday, too, when our Master died, and it shook the whole world. And remember, it might be the sign of Him returning. He said, that, "There'd be earthquakes in divers places."

Today we got another one in California, and they're just

appearing everywhere, light earthquakes. We notice, even the Capitol building has moved out of its place, and moved back. And--and down here in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, there's a swimming pool there, dashed the waters out, from plumb from Alaska. Over in Switzerland, Sweden, and through there, shook buildings and things, around the world. I believe that it's trying to open our eyes, to see the hour that we're living. I'm here in godly fear, that, it may be sooner than we think, of His appearing."



(64-0401 The Identified Christ of All Ages)

So, this age, has already had an earthquake as a warning, Laodicea had multiple earthquakes in the city, and this age will be no different, finally being shaken to the point of destruction.

“And everything has been said, oh, even to the destruction of California, coming up now, and all these other things. And how I told them how many days it would be, how it would be where this big earthquake happened in Alaska, and that would be the beginning of the sign of time, and what would take place. And just word by word, what It said, it's never failed one time. You've never seen It fail. And It can't fail, because It's God's Words. 'And Heaven and earth will pass away, but It can't fail.' That's right.”

(65-1125 The Invisible Union of the Bride of Christ)

God is showing us what can fail and what can't. We see the “shaking” that is to come. All that is materialism, all that is not of God, will fail and be shaken.

“Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

(Hebrews 12:26,27)

Isn't it fitting that in this age all will be shaken. Brother Branham wrote on page 320 and 321/365 p6:

“The city was rich, endowed by the wealthy. It was full of culture. Science abounded. How like today. The churches are rich. The worship is beautiful and formal, but cold and dead. Culture and education have taken the place of the Spirit-given Word, and faith has been superseded by science, so that man is a victim of materialism.”

Man has become a victim of materialism. God is going to show at the end of this age that EVERYTHING that is material will be shaken and destroyed. Only “those things which cannot be shaken may remain”. Only God's Eternal Word will remain. So, the question is left to you, do you have God's Word in you? Are you a part of God's Eternal Word? The shaking is coming, we must be a part of it now!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 323 – 326

Questions

- 1) Where is the proof that the Laodicean messenger will be a prophet? _____
- 2) Is the angel of Revelation 10:7 a heavenly being? _____
- 3) What is the only way of bringing out spiritual revelations? _____
- 4) To which age did God send a group of theologians to correct the error? _____
- 5) What is the specific work this Elijah will have? _____

- 6) Who turned the hearts of the Father's to the children? _____
- 7) List the men upon whom the Spirit of Elijah has been. (After Elijah himself)

- 8) (True/False) The majority will listen to and accept the messenger to the Laodicean Age. _____
- 9) List the similarities between John and Elijah.

Memorize: *“Now this messenger of Malachi 4 and Revelation 10:7 is going to do two things. One: According to Malachi 4 he will turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. Two: He will reveal the mysteries of the seven thunders in Revelation 10 which are the revelations contained in the seven seals. It will be these Divinely revealed 'mystery-truths' that literally turn the hearts of the children to the Pentecostal fathers. Exactly so.”*

Lesson 64 - Laodicea: The Messenger

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write:" (Revelation 3:14a)

The Messenger to US!

For the first six ages, we have had the benefit of looking back over history to determine who the messenger to each age was. It was easy to determine through Scripture that Paul was the first messenger. By studying Paul's ministry, and knowing that God does not change, we can determine who each messenger was. We simply compare them to the traits of Paul's ministry, namely getting away from organization, signs and wonders following, and staying true to the Word. Of course, we have had the benefit of Brother Branham doing all those comparisons of men's lives for us, and telling us who they were.

Today's lesson begins with Brother Branham writing:

"I DOUBT VERY MUCH IF ANY AGE TRULY KNEW THE MESSENGER THAT GOD HAD SENT UNTO IT, EXCEPT IN THE FIRST AGE WHERE PAUL WAS THE MESSENGER. AND EVEN IN THAT AGE MANY DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM FOR WHAT HE WAS."

He is writing this to us. To our age. Do we know who our messenger is? So many ages did not, but the history that we have been studying has now come to *present* day. Observing history we note many did not know the messenger of their age, so the question is, will we?

In our reading for this lesson, Brother Branham begins to answer that question through Scriptures showing what that messenger will be. These should all be very familiar Scriptures to you and you should have them memorized because they are about the Church Age you live in. Revelation 10:7, Amos 3:7, Matt. 17:10, Mal. 4:5,6, Luke 1:17, Matt. 17:12.

He deals with the coming of Elijah, and how the last messenger will have those same characteristics. A man of the wilderness, not accepted by the religious schools, and crying out against immoral women. He'll be vindicated by God, even if he's not popular to other people.

Malachi 4:6 – Turning the Hearts

Did you ever wonder what the phrase "*turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the father*" means? Who are the fathers? Who are the children?

"Now, when John came as Elijah, he turned the hearts of the Israelites, the hearts of the children that was then accepting his message, the hearts of the fathers to the children. But when he comes this time, he's going to turn the hearts of the Church back to the Pentecostal fathers. See, it's a vice versa there. You get it? Now, read It!"

(60-1211e The Laodicean Church Age)

So the first part, “*fathers to the children*” was the hearts of the Israelites, the “*fathers*” schooled in the Law of Moses, became children by accepting his message and becoming Pentecostal children. It was John the Baptist that began that process by telling people to repent. So, they repented, they saw the message of their day, they accepted the Messiah, and He gave them the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. They had a new birth - they became children.

Of course, we look at those men on the day of Pentecost now as Pentecostal fathers. Fathers of the faith, whom we should be like. Today we have a ministry that is turning our faith BACK to our Pentecostal fathers. We should be turning our faith, so that it is like the day of Pentecost in Word and in deed.

Who can tell us these things?

Did you ever notice in the Scripture, as John the Baptist was in the wilderness the Israelites came to him and said “are you he?” and “who are you?”. John Identified *himself* in the Scriptures as Isaiah 40:3. Many times we think it would be arrogant for someone to identify themselves by the Scriptures that apply to them. Yet we must ask ourselves, who is qualified to do that? Only a prophet is qualified, to first show us the Scriptures that *apply* to our day, and then show us who it is that is manifesting them. Even a prophet must find himself in the Scriptures.

As we have just mentioned, the reason we know Paul is the messenger to the first age, is because He told us what his ministry was.

Look at Jesus reading the Scroll in Nazareth. He chose to read the Scripture that identified *Himself*, and what was happening in His day, and told the people that it was being fulfilled and manifested before them.

So, who IS the messenger of our day? Does it not make Scriptural sense that the one who is pointing out all the Scriptures that apply to our day is the only one it could be? Without the ministry of William Branham, we wouldn't even understand definitively that there are Seven Church AGES. While there were some who had opinions and got very close to what Brother Branham taught, they did not identify themselves as Malachi 4:5,6 or as Revelation 10:7 to emphatically show the authority to proclaim this as the correct interpretation. We have identification and vindication showing us these things are true. Because of this ministry, we understand all that we have been studying throughout this book. It is no longer man's ideas or conjectures, but it is the Message to the Church of Laodicea.

I hope you can see and know who the messenger for YOUR AGE is.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 327 – 331

Questions

- 1) What happens immediately after the coming of the 4th Elijah? _____

- 2) What turns the hearts of the children to the fathers? _____

- 3) How many prophet-messengers can the Laodicean Age have? _____
- 4) Can there be multiple prophets in the last age? _____

- 5) Where is a false prophet found? _____

- 6) What will people claim after the prophet-messenger says the revival is over? _____

Memorize: *“Now this messenger of Malachi 4 and Revelation 10:7 is going to do two things. One: According to Malachi 4 he will turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. Two: He will reveal the mysteries of the seven thunders in Revelation 10 which are the revelations contained in the seven seals. It will be these Divinely revealed 'mystery-truths' that literally turn the hearts of the children to the Pentecostal fathers. Exactly so.”*

Lesson 65 - Laodicea: The Salutation

*"These things saith the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God;"
(Revelation 3:14b)*

Descriptions of His Deity

Do you remember all the times we've talked about repetition in each age? We noted it in chapter 5. Each age has repetition, because of the importance of these themes. In our study we have noticed the following:

- 1) Each age God shows us His deity
- 2) Each age God says *"Unto the Angel"*
- 3) Each age God says *"I know thy works"*
- 4) Each age God gives a promise to the overcomer.
- 5) Each age God says *"He that hath an ear, let him hear"*

So let's just review how God has expressed His Deity in each age.

"He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;"

"The first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;"

"He which hath the sharp sword with two edges;"

"The Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;"

"He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars;"

"He that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;"

"The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;"

If there's one thing that we should get from the study of this book, it's that we should understand conclusively that there is ONE GOD and His Name is Jesus! We should understand that Jesus is fully God. And we should understand that Jehovah of the Old Testament is Jesus of the New Testament.

God of the Amen: Jehovah of the Old is Jesus of the New

Working with the thought of *"the Amen"* Brother Branham takes other Scriptures and shows us that in the New Testament *"the Amen"* is the same in the Old Testament *"the God of Truth"*. Brother Branham will show us how Jehovah of the Old Testament is Jesus of the New. We should go back and review this concept from when Brother Branham preached about it.

“Then as I turned and started along a familiar little pathway by the side of a pasture that crossed over to an L-shape in the woods, and something strange took place. All my experiences, I've never had anything like that. I looked at the top of the hill to my left from where I was standing, and there, coming up out of like the top of the hill, came three rainbows. And they were running some thirty-foot high. First, I looked and seen the Light and I just turned back, because I thought it might be the sun raising. On the second thought, it wasn't towards the sun; it was towards the south. And another thing, it was smooth, cloudy, rain, raining all over. That was August the twenty-fifth, last Friday morning, and you know how it was raining. And it's smooth clouds everywhere. And I looked again, and there it was, growing taller and taller, three rainbows. I took off my hat. I set down my gun. I started walking towards it with my hands up. Something just seemed to tell me, "This is close enough." I was going to set down and take off my boots that I had on, to see if I could walk a little closer. But I got within a few yards of it, and I seen the color of it, misting like a fog moving around. I stood still for a few moments. It was coming right out of the top of the little mountain. And I watched, as the three (one to the right, one to the left, and one in the center) running down into one bowl-like... Ever what it was, was alive. It was moving and making its motions. And I stood there just as it was graying dawn.

I turned and looked again, and I screamed out, 'O God, what would You have Your servant know?'

Just then the Spirit of the Lord came in and said, 'Jesus of the New Testament is Jehovah of the Old, He only changed His mask from Spirit to man.' That was confirming, of course, my message of Him, letting me know, assured that these thirty-one years hasn't been in vain.”

(61-0827 The Message of Grace)

It is fitting that the messenger to the last age would have an experience confirming this truth. The first Church Age Messenger, Paul, also had this experience. When he was on the road to Damascus and the Pillar of Fire came to him, he said “who art thou Lord?” He was told “I am Jesus”. Paul knew right there that “Lord” – the Jehovah of the Old, was Jesus of the New. That Jesus WAS God, the same Person, just veiled in human flesh.

New Creation

As we read our lesson, pay special attention to the difference Brother Branham calls us to on “*Another creation*”. Jesus was the beginning of this new creation of God.

When you receive a “*new birth*”, what has happened to you? What have you received? You have been born again into a *NEW CREATION*. The old things are passed away, and ALL things have become *NEW*¹. This is the new creation that is being spoken of here. Jesus is the first born among brethren. The Beginning of the Creation of God. This is the New Creation. This new creation isn't the creation that started before there ever was an earth. God didn't create Himself. We know that all things were made BY HIM, so how could He be made? But Jesus, the man, was the beginning of the new creation. Jesus didn't need a “*new birth*” but His first birth was into the new creation. When we receive OUR new birth, we are born again, created anew, into the same creation Jesus' birth was the beginning of.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 331 - 338

Questions

- 1) "Jesus is giving us this _____ of Himself in _____ to the _____."
- 2) In each age God gives us a look at His _____.
- 3) "Amen stands for _____."
- 4) Isaiah 65:16 really should be God of the _____.
- 5) If the God of the Old Testament is the God of the Amen and Jesus in Revelation is the Amen then _____ of the Old Testament is the _____ of the New Testament.
- 6) (True/False) Christ came to make Himself known. _____
- 7) What is the capstone revelation? _____

- 8) (True/False) You never really know how you stand with God. _____
- 9) What the AMEN started out with in _____ He will finish in _____.
- 10) Who are the only ones on the winning side? _____
- 11) "His very _____ is for His own."
- 12) What is the proof Jesus went to the Father? _____
- 13) Who created the Bride? _____
- 14) (True/False) God is dealing with ways of the flesh in the new creation. _____

Memorize: "Now this messenger of Malachi 4 and Revelation 10:7 is going to do two things. One: According to Malachi 4 he will turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. Two: He will reveal the mysteries of the seven thunders in Revelation 10 which are the revelations contained in the seven seals. It will be these Divinely revealed 'mystery-truths' that literally turn the hearts of the children to the Pentecostal fathers. Exactly so."

¹ II Corinthians 5:17

Lesson 66 - Laodicea: Indictment (part 1)

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent." (Revelation 3:15-19)

There are two indictments, or things that God says are wrong, about this age. These indictments can be summarized as:

- 1) They are lukewarm
- 2) They said they were rich

This lesson will look at the first one, and our next lesson will continue with the second. As we live in this age it is very important that we understand what God says is wrong about it. We certainly do not want to be guilty of doing something God has already indicted!

Lukewarm

"THEN WHAT IS WRONG WITH THESE PEOPLE OF THE LAST DAY? THEY HAVE GOTTEN AWAY FROM THE WORD. THEY ARE NO LONGER FERVENT ABOUT IT. THEY ARE LUKEWARM ABOUT IT. I AM GOING TO PROVE THAT RIGHT NOW."

God does not like this lukewarm condition. It relates to their attitude about the Word. They are not *fervent* about the Word! To be *fervent* about something is to show great warmth or intensity. The church of this current Laodicean age is not *fervent* about the Word. They may be fervent about building churches, large congregations, discipling people, building schools, orphanages, hospitals and all the rest of good works that are genuinely helpful – but they are not *fervent* about God's Word.

Because of the church's lack of *fergency* God gives us a Word picture here. He says because they are lukewarm He will spue them out of His mouth. Now we see a couple things here, the first is being spued out. God is sickened by their lack of honor for His Word. As He is sick, He "throws up" what was in Him. The church, not individuals, is spued out like vomit.

Secondly, we see that it is spued out of His *mouth*. Now, what is in the mouth of God? As we learned in chapter two as we studied the Patmos vision that the sharp sword which is the Word is in God's mouth. God is getting the church out of there. The church no longer speaks for God. She has been spued out – she is not a good representative of Him.

Think of Romans 10:8

“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;”

WE AS INDIVIDUALS ARE TO HAVE HIS WORD IN OUR HEART AND MOUTH. GOD PUTS IT THERE! HE WANTS US TO BE HIS VOICE! WE MUST BE CAREFUL THEN TO BE FERVENT ABOUT HIS WORD! NOT OUR CREEDS, DOGMAS, OR IDEAS – BUT HIS WORD ALONE.

Voice for the People - Voice to the Bride

Now, how do we be sure that we stay true to His Word? God sends us messengers with the Word for our day. The Word always corrects the errors, just as Jesus in the temple at twelve years old told Mary “I must be about My Father’s business” after she said “I and thy father have sought thee”

So we find that God sends a Voice to the Bride. That Voice is the prophet that He sends to call the people back and to restore the faith.

Then, the Bride under their messenger are the final Voice to the final age. They are His Body and His Voice, they perform His works. They have a Voice sent to them, and by that, they become a Voice to the world.

No, the church is not the Voice of God. They are spued out of His mouth because they don't honor the Word/Voice that God sent. The Bride has honored His Word though, and She has that sharp two edged sword. She has the Word in her heart and upon her lips daily!

We are cautioned in the lesson today, though we take joy in knowing we have a Voice, we must be careful to be *fervent* about it in the right way. We cannot stand around, debate it, and take only parts of it. We must take the whole Word and LIVE it.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 338 – 341

Questions

- 1) How many good things does the Spirit say about Laodicea? _____

- 2) Does God spue individuals out of His mouth? _____

- 3) “Then *what is wrong with these people of the last day?*” _____

- 4) “For _____ out of _____ ages I have seen nothing but men
_____ their own _____ above _____.”

- 5) The last day messenger will be far from what three things?

- 6) “*Those elect with him*” on page 340/389 p85. Who is “*him*”? _____

- 7) “And those elect with him in that day will be the ones who truly manifest the Lord and be _____
_____ and be _____ and perform _____.”

- 8) Who became living epistles in Wesley’s day? _____

- 9) “The church is no longer _____.”

- 10) “You are not doing anything about the Word except _____ and _____
it into _____, taking what you _____ and leaving out what you _____
_. You are not interested in _____ it but _____ it.”

- 11) “God still has a voice for the _____, even as He has given a
voice to _____. That voice is _____ as...”

Memorize: “Now this messenger of Malachi 4 and Revelation 10:7 is going to do two things. One: According to Malachi 4 he will turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. Two: He will reveal the mysteries of the seven thunders in Revelation 10 which are the revelations contained in the seven seals. It will be these Divinely revealed ‘mystery-truths’ that literally turn the hearts of the children to the Pentecostal fathers. Exactly so.”

Lesson 67 - Laodicea: Indictment (part 2)

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent." (Revelation 3:15-19)

This lesson will look at the second indictment: *"they said they were rich"*. Our last lesson we discussed the first indictment: *"they were Lukewarm"*. As we live in this age it is very important that we understand what God says is wrong about it. We certainly do not want to be guilty of doing something God has already indicted!

"Because thou Sayest"

"Because thou sayest" relates to what THEY were saying. This is interesting, because we note that we just read before this that God has spued the church out of His mouth. It wasn't GOD saying they were rich, the church was saying it about themselves – and it wasn't even true!

Self-Estimate

Here's something that we could dwell on and apply to our lives! The church was looking at who they were and determining that they were rich. Their estimation was that all was going well, even at the same time God is telling them quite the contrary!

When is the last time you did a self-estimate? That you reflected on your life to determine where you are in your walk with Christ? What did you find? Did you feel you were doing well? Did you feel you needed to do better? Most importantly, how did you determine how you were doing?

It is ONLY by comparing ourselves to God's Word we can do ANY such evaluation. Many times we compare ourselves to others, this is not wise or valid. Many times we have an image in our mind of what a Christian should be like, but where did that mental picture come from? It MUST be comparing ourselves to God's Word.

Think of the Pharisees of Jesus' day. One could say they were so spiritual, but their hearts were darkened. It is good for us to evaluate our hearts, just as much as our actions! We have come full circle again, as the church was in the first coming; outwardly religious, feeling as if they were spotless – so are we at for the second coming. Big churches, smiling preachers, happiness and *"love"* but no room for the truth! No room for holiness! No room for true Godly love! No room for sincere repentance, to turn from the world, and cleave unto God! How they SAY they are rich – but they are not.

So, evaluate yourself before the next lesson. Evaluate your actions AND your heart. Do not find yourself declaring yourself to be rich, in any way, unless you are spiritually rich!

If you are spiritually rich, you will find it impacts your life in holiness and peace. You will find you've had a NEW BIRTH! As we studied two lessons ago, that new birth makes you a NEW CREATION. Not the same old guy or girl who has merely been forgiven, but you have become a NEW CREATURE in Christ.

Sisters, as you read through this lesson, do not feel picked on, but admonished to hold the high standard the Word sets before you. Embrace who God made you as a female, and act accordingly.

“I have need of nothing”

After this church's self-estimate was done they determined they didn't need anything. Brother Branham said they became complacent.

Now, I find it hard to believe anyone can have “enough” of God and not need anymore! There's so much of Him out there to have!

If you decide you are doing pretty well, and that you have enough after your self-estimate, here are the things Brother Branham asks of this church. Where is the;

- Love
- Power
- Purity to withstand sin
- Walking with faith toward Jesus
- Unity

So evaluate yourself on those things. How are YOU doing?

Assignment: Reading: Pages 341 – 345

Questions

- 1) I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. That was her _____.
- 2) Where does Brother Branham indicate children are supposed to receive the majority of their Christian training? _____
- 3) What indication are we given to know this is the last age? _____

- 4) “The work is not being done as it was done when there was _____, but men rested solely on the _____ given them by the _____.”
- 5) If wealth means you are spiritual, who already has God? _____
- 6) “If the church were truly spiritually rich, its _____ would be felt upon _____.”
- 7) “There ought to be some _____ of the _____
_____ amongst all those we see go by.”
- 8) What is a woman’s long hair to her? _____
- 9) Cutting her hair said she left the _____ of her husband, got the _____, took men’s _____, left off being _____.
- 10) The fact is the church is _____. She either figures she has it _____ or has _____.
- 11) “Compare the twentieth century church to the first century church. ... Where is the _____? Where is the _____? Where is the _____ that withstood _____ and walked with _____ toward Jesus? Where is the _____?”

Memorize: “Now this messenger of Malachi 4 and Revelation 10:7 is going to do two things. One: According to Malachi 4 he will turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. Two: He will reveal the mysteries of the seven thunders in Revelation 10 which are the revelations contained in the seven seals. It will be these Divinely revealed 'mystery-truths' that literally turn the hearts of the children to the Pentecostal fathers. Exactly so.”

Lesson 68 - Laodicea: God's Diagnosis

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;" (Revelation 3:17)

The Emperor's new clothes

Do you remember reading the tale of the Emperor's new clothes as a child? The emperor, in his pride, is lifted up and he is deluded into believing a new set of clothes that are so fine were made for him. He put on these "clothes" and went off down the street. Everyone told him what fine clothes he had, when he wasn't actually wearing anything! Everyone is deluded into the same lie, until a young honest child said "he's not wearing anything!"

That is a perfect example of what God says this age is. They are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked and they don't know it!

Thousands of Christians and churches today are this emperor. They are going about as if everything is wonderful and just fine, but they are blind and naked. Only someone who has lost their mind can be blind and naked and not even know it! Spiritually, the church of this age is claiming they have need of nothing – but they HAVE NOTHING! Not clothes or sight!

We find a church that is wretched. One that has all kinds of money, but no peace or happiness.

We find a church that is miserable. They don't even know how bad they are or how they are in the curse of organization.

We find a church that is poor. They have money and big churches, they have filled altars and speaking in tongues, but they lack the true baptism, they lack the new birth!

We find a church that is blind. They think they have it all, and can see it all. They do not realize they need to be taught.

We find a church that is naked. They have refused to put on the Word of God.

We find a church that doesn't even know it is any of these things and thinks the exact opposite!!

Rather than being blind and naked as the church of this age is, God sent us a messenger to declare the truth. His desire was this:



"I hope He will crown my ministry of this, of letting me take the clothes of the Word, and dress His Bride in the clothes of the Word, and for His righteousness. I hope He will crown me, let me stand on that day, say, "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world."

(62-0908 - Present Stage of My Ministry)

The True Church of this day is not blind and naked. God has sent sight through a keen-eyed prophet-eagle. That prophet is dressing the Bride, the True Church, with the Word of God

How we ought to be like David

"O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97)

To love the Word of God is so crucial to the True Church. Without it we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked and don't even know it.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 345 – 349

Questions

- 1) Wretched comes from two Greek words meaning? _____
- 2) Miserable means: _____
- 3) “Pity those who do not know the _____ of _____.”
- 4) “They are poor” means they are _____.
- 5) Why does Brother Branham say that filled altars and the gifts of the Spirit in operation is not the answer from God? _____

- 6) What does glossolalia mean? (look in dictionary) _____

- 7) Tongues are a sign of _____.
- 8) How can one be blind and naked and not know it? _____.
- 9) Can Scripture fight Scripture? _____
- 10) Does the Bible contradict the Bible? _____
- 11) Can two doctrines of truth in the Word say the opposite or oppose one another? _____
- 12) What percentage of God’s people have learned all Scripture is given by God and all is profitable for doctrine? _____%.
- 13) People became blind because they refused the _____. What did they choose instead?

Memorize: “Now this messenger of Malachi 4 and Revelation 10:7 is going to do two things. One: According to Malachi 4 he will turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. Two: He will reveal the mysteries of the seven thunders in Revelation 10 which are the revelations contained in the seven seals. It will be these Divinely revealed 'mystery-truths' that literally turn the hearts of the children to the Pentecostal fathers. Exactly so.”

Lesson 69 - Laodicea: Final Counsel

"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." (Revelation 3:18,19)

Gold

In the last lesson we talked about the Emperor's New Clothes. As this lesson is about gold, we'll continue the fairy tale theme and talk about King Midas. King Midas was granted his request that everything he touched was turned to gold. At first, he was so joyous as to the riches he was creating, but soon, he grew sorrowful because he realized he could never again hold his daughter.



So many think, like King Midas, that gold and riches are so important, but when it finally comes to where they feel they *"have enough"* they realize with sorrow how much they have had to trade, in character and relationships, to obtain what they felt was *"enough"*. Finally, they realize the price to obtain that gold was very high.

So too has this Laodicean Church, traded the things of God and a true relationship with Him, for riches, big churches, and large congregations. They become the King Midas of churches, rich and powerful, but they can no longer hold their God. He has left their church. Their *"answer"* to problems has been money and programs, but they are devoid of the Spirit.

Here in our Scripture, He is counseling them to buy gold from Him! You see, for Him to say this must mean the church has been getting gold from somewhere – anywhere - but not from Him. That's why He is saying buy from ME, because their gold is no good, and what they have obtained, they didn't get from Him!

Character, the only thing that goes with you.

So what is the gold that we will receive from Him? What is the gold He is saying to buy of me? It's the gold that is *"tried in the fire"*. Brother Branham writes:

*"THE GOLD OF GOD IS A CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER PRODUCED IN THE FIERY FURNACE OF AFFLICTION. THAT IS THE RIGHT KIND OF GOLD."*¹

So, the church of Laodicea is happy about her wealth and affluence in the worldly systems, but that is not going with them when they die. Only the Gold of God, produced in the fiery furnace of affliction, is lasting; the character that is molded in you by the things that you go through. Remember what we read on page 117/127 p27? (*"Character is a Victory, not a gift"* – go read it!) Peter even tells us in his letter:

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." (I Peter 5:10)

If our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ had to suffer, do you think we will not have any suffering? The suffering and affliction we endure produces something very valuable. When we suffer the loss of a loved one, we gain empathy for others who have gone through a similar loss.

Christ was even tempted in every way with the same temptations we go through. He fully understands us and knows the battle we go through

Imagine suffering a heartbreak or loss of some kind, and having a friend who has never experienced the same thing. Your friend doesn't understand why you are taking it so hard, or struggling with whatever problem you may be facing. Does this help you? No, it doesn't. Then the same friend goes through the struggle later and comes back to you and says, "I didn't understand, but I do now. I'm sorry I wasn't more helpful". Why does this kind of thing happen? Because, through the fiery furnace of affliction your friend has learned *CHARACTER!*

Rebuke, Chasten, Repent

Because this Church Age has gone after a different kind of gold, and building their own "spiritual" house, God is rebuking them. God is chastening them to come back. He's telling them in love they need to repent. What a statement is made in this lesson:

"YES, THIS IS THE AGE THAT MOST NEEDS TO REPENT. BUT WILL IT? WILL IT BRING BACK THE WORD? WILL IT AGAIN ENTHRONE THE HOLY SPIRIT IN MEN'S LIVES? WILL IT AGAIN REVERE JESUS AS THE ONLY SAVIOUR?"

Don't let the mark of this Church Age be on you. Make sure that YOU repent. That YOU buy of God the gold that lasts.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 349 – 356

Questions

- 1) How many hopes does God direct the church to? _____
- 2) Who is that hope? _____
- 3) What is the Gold of God and where is it produced? _____

- 4) What has the church of this age made the criterion of Spirituality? _____
- 5) What is the only thing we can take with us when we die? _____
- 6) *Challenge/Application:* In what ways do you think the church tries to buy out of sin and buy in to heaven? _____

- 7) What price do we pay to be clothed with garments in this “naked and don’t know it” age? _____

- 8) Without the Spirit of God the church will substitute _____ for power and _____ for Word.
- 9) (True/False) It says in Hebrews God chastens the ones that love Him. _____
- 10) “To reprove is to _____.”
- 11) Chasten means to discipline because the _____.
- 12) He desired in _____ a _____ of His own.
- 13) What zeal is God calling for? The zeal to cry _____.

Memorize: “Now this messenger of Malachi 4 and Revelation 10:7 is going to do two things. One: According to Malachi 4 he will turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. Two: He will reveal the mysteries of the seven thunders in Revelation 10 which are the revelations contained in the seven seals. It will be these Divinely revealed 'mystery-truths' that literally turn the hearts of the children to the Pentecostal fathers. Exactly so.”

¹ Page 351/402 p133

Lesson 70 - Laodicea: Christ outside the church

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (Revelation 3:20-22)

Christ outside the church

"And, remember, between the Son of God...In the Laodicea church age, they put Him out. And in Luke, He said He would be revealed again as Son of man, the Prophet, fulfilling the rest of it. See? The Scriptures tie perfectly together. Son of man, Son of God, Son of David. What was it? It's the same God all the time, just changing His form, en morphé. He just change it. It's a great drama to Him. He is acting it out."

(64-0614m - The Unveiling Of God)

In this Laodicean Age, we find Christ knocking to get in. What does that tell us? That Christ is outside the church. This isn't a message to individuals but it says, *"let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."* So we understand that Christ is OUTSIDE the very church that claims to worship Him.

As we read in the quote, just above, the church put Him out. In this lesson, we read a nice review of the ages past, and the progression of the church, slowly pushing out Christ and His Word.

We will also see the picture of the eclipse of the moon from Dec 30th, 1963, just before the Pope visited Jerusalem, in 1964¹. Much can be looked at on this to study, but it is worth mentioning there was an eclipse of the moon 50 years later in 2014 when the Pope left the United States. Search "Blood Moon" on Branham.org for more of an in-depth look on the subject.

The marks of an overcomer.

"Even as I overcame". Now this is very interesting. We are tempted, no doubt, to think that Jesus was perfect and could not be tempted. He WAS perfect, but He was ALSO tempted. He just knew how to withstand temptation. He was tempted without sinning. Here we find the solution for us, we can overcome *"even as"* or in the same way that Jesus overcame. We are capable of doing what He did, and He is our example!

Now, as we look, we'll find out that He overcame by the Word; by constantly applying the Word, and by obedience to the Word.

So, the Word.

If you remember, one of the issues with this age is they are no longer FERVENT about the Word.

A recipe for disaster!

We overcome by the Word, but we are in danger of not caring about the Word! We MUST care about the Word, obeying the Word, and constantly applying the Word.

Eve didn't. She looked at another idea. A different thought than the Word had. Was what the serpent said true? That didn't matter. It wasn't in the lines of being in obedience to the Word. Eve didn't overcome, because she didn't use the Word. Jesus overcame because He used the Word!

What are you facing? Your pride of life? The lust of your eyes? The lust of your flesh? You can overcome it by the Word, constantly applying the Word, and by obeying the Word.

The sin and pressures of life we face can be met by the Word. The devil tries to entice us as He did Eve, as He did Jesus. "Be great like a God" he told Eve. How marvelous that must have sounded! "Be rich, be powerful, be popular"; he entices us. We must value the Word as Jesus did. The devil tried to entice Jesus with inheriting the world, or even using Jesus' own power to turn rocks to bread. Could that have hurt? Was there a reason He shouldn't have used faith to feed His hunger? Was He not heir to all the kingdoms of the world anyway? Yet Jesus knew the Word and applied it. He wasn't enticed by the offers of the devil, but He was satisfied with what the Father had given Him.

Follow Christ by obeying the Word in your life. Be satisfied with what God has provided you. Don't go looking after "special eye-opening pleasures". Be fervent about the Word! You have a better reward waiting for you. Sitting on the throne with Jesus! What a wonderful thing that will be!

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James 1:12)

Assignment: Reading: Pages 356 – 361, Matthew 4

Questions

- 1) What verse tells us God is speaking to the churches and not individuals? _____
- 2) Christ leaving the church is the logical end result if the _____ is put aside for _____, the _____ deposited for _____ and the _____ set aside for a _____ program or church _____
- 3) What was the name of the first pope to go to Jerusalem? _____
- 4) What happened to the moon when this pope went to Jerusalem? _____
- 5) (True/False) Elect can harm and persecute elect. _____
- 6) (True/False) The vine/twin that did not love the things of God did so because he didn't know about Him. _____
- 7) What is the binding of the tares? _____
- 8) How do we find out HOW Jesus overcame? _____
- 9) Jesus overcame the personal temptations of Satan by _____.
- 10) Jesus overcame the world systems of religion by constantly _____.
- 11) Jesus overcame His personal life by _____.
- 12) Challenge: What do you think is the difference between "living that Word" and "your prayers, your fastings, your repentances" _____
- 13) The Laodicean Age ends in a _____ of the Word.

Memorize: "Now this messenger of Malachi 4 and Revelation 10:7 is going to do two things. One: According to Malachi 4 he will turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. Two: He will reveal the mysteries of the seven thunders in Revelation 10 which are the revelations contained in the seven seals. It will be these Divinely revealed 'mystery-truths' that literally turn the hearts of the children to the Pentecostal fathers. Exactly so."

Lesson 71 - Laodicea: Consummation of the Ages

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (Revelation 3:21-22)

True and False Vine Contrasts

The parable of the wheat and tares, that we have looked at many times in this study, isn't merely a parable, but Brother Branham tells us this is a mystery that comes to pass. God planted good seed, the devil planted the tares. Both look so similar, but now at the end, at the time of harvest, we can see the differences, or contrasts, between the two. Let's have a look at the contrasts at the end of the age, when both fruits are to be harvested from the wheat and tares.

Fruits

False vine “*fruits*” are not worth eating, and are spewed out of Gods mouth. True Vine “*fruits*” are brought to His throne.

Fire

One is judged and burnt as chaff with unquenchable fire, the other is purified by a Holy Ghost fire.

Fullness

One is evil-spirited and full of iniquity, using the political power to destroy the True Church. The True Church is full of the Holy Spirit and the Word, using THAT power as Jesus did.

Facts

One group has a council, the other has a prophet.

Finality

We are coming back to the original. What started at Pentecost, buried in the ground at Nicaea, and began growing in Sardis, is now maturing to become the original Word seed. Restored to the original by Malachi 4:5,6 and Revelation 10:7

So, God planted the wheat, the devil planted the tares, and they are both coming to harvest. The tares are being bound and destroyed, but the wheat is being gathered into the barn.

Don't forget, as this is a book of prophecy, these things are hidden in these Word pictures. God wasn't plainly telling John everything, but was revealing what would happen in the end. Today, we have the prophet of Revelation 10:7 to show us the meaning of the symbols!

LAST WARNING

The Spirit won't speak in another age, but that's okay because He gave us everything we need in this one. No more NEEDS TO BE SAID to us for us to become Bride. Even if the Lord does not come back until the year 2289 it won't need to be changed or updated. God will not speak again in another age. He has given us the full revelation and it is enough until He comes. Of course we do not believe it will be 2289...but soon and very soon!

The Spirit and the Bride says the same thing *"come"* The prophet is speaking as the Spirit gives Him the message, to say the same thing as the Spirit, we must say the same thing as the prophet.

"How did He bring Christ here? By the Word of the prophets. Is that right? How will He bring His Bride here? By the Word of the prophets."

(65-0718m Trying to Do God a Service Without Being the Will of God)

Notice what we are told in this last section *"They that hear him will be blessed and become part of that bride of the last day"*. We must hear the messenger to the 7th Church Age in our day.

How appropriate it is to have the Scriptures for each age ending with *"He that hath an ear let him hear"*.

In an age where our messenger has had his voice, his message to the churches, recorded in audio form – are you hearing? Not only listening, but hearing!

Hopefully God has dealt with you as you have read through this book and done this study. We have only one chapter left, and much Truth has been covered. It has shown the truth of the church and the devils plans to thwart what God has been doing since the day of Pentecost. You are one of these *fruits* we have discussed in this lesson. What will your end be? The city that we are going to is a prepared city, for a prepared Bride. Have you been making preparation to go?

Assignment: Reading: Pages 361 – 365

Questions

- 1) "What began in the _____ or _____ age must and will come to full fruition and harvest in the _____ or _____."
- 2) "We find the true _____, true _____, true _____ people exalted to the very _____."
- 3) The true seed are _____ with the Holy Ghost and _____. The chaff (false tare seed) are _____ with _____.
- 4) Why did the tares receive of the blessings of God? _____

- 5) "The true vine with the fullness of the _____ and the _____ will do the _____ that Jesus did."
- 6) He who would speak where God has not makes Him what? _____
- 7) *Think:* What is the difference between tongues being a manifestation but not evidence? _____

- 8) After Laodicea, how many warnings are left? _____.
- 9) "She is a city _____ for a prepared _____."
- 10) They that hear the last messenger will be _____ and become part of that _____.

Memorize: "Now this messenger of Malachi 4 and Revelation 10:7 is going to do two things. One: According to Malachi 4 he will turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. Two: He will reveal the mysteries of the seven thunders in Revelation 10 which are the revelations contained in the seven seals. It will be these Divinely revealed 'mystery-truths' that literally turn the hearts of the children to the Pentecostal fathers. Exactly so."

Congratulations! You finished Chapter 9! Only one Chapter left!

Lesson 72 - Summary: A Resume of the Ages

Purpose of this chapter

“...WE HAVE NOT SET FORTH A CONTINUOUS HISTORICAL PATTERN OF THE CHURCH AS MUCH AS WE OUGHT TO HAVE DONE. IT IS, THEREFORE, OUR PURPOSE NOW TO TAKE THIS CHAPTER, AND BEGINNING WITH THE EPHESIAN AGE TRACE THROUGH ALL AGES THE CHURCH AND HER HISTORY AS GIVEN TO JOHN BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.” (PAGE 366/419 P1)

“NOW AS THIS CONCLUDING CHAPTER WAS GIVEN IN ORDER TO TRACE THE TWO CHURCHES AND TWO SPIRITS FROM PENTECOST TO THEIR CONSUMMATION...” (PAGE 377/432 P57)

What is a “*resume*” of the ages, you may ask? Well, a *resume* is a summary of something. Many people seeking a job send in a “*resume*” or a summary of their experience, education, skills and qualifications. So, this final chapter is a summary, or full review of what we have learned.

Until this point we have been reading, as Brother Branham has been “*expositing*” the Scriptures. Ah! Another word we don't know! *Exposition* is in the title of this book. “An *Exposition* of the Seven Church Ages.” So what is *exposition*? It is a making known or explaining, in this case or in what is known as “*expository* preaching” it is a verse by verse explanation. So, the first nine chapters have been *expository* or an *exposition*. This last chapter is now a *resume* or summary of the whole thing – the continuous historical pattern of the church.

So, we will read a short review from the Ephesian Age to the Laodicean Age to bring it all together quickly. It has taken us many weeks to read through each age, so now we will quickly study through the entire history, to bring it all together in our minds.

Accountable Marriage to God

First, we review to whom God is speaking. It is to the churches. It is not only the True Bride Church, it is also to the false church, that is claiming they are His.



WHEAT: before it is fully ripe.



TARES: Lolium Temulentum

Why does God even take the time to speak to both? Why not just address the true? The false church isn't going to listen anyway, right? Well, because the false churches “*claim*” a relationship to Christ, God then considers it the same as marriage, and holds them responsible to listen to Him.

After reading the second paragraph of page 366/419 p2, go back and read the second and third paragraph of 226/250 p55-57, and the third paragraph of page 208/229 p227. This will give you a fuller understanding of why God is dealing with the

false church that claims Him.

So, now that we know God is speaking to both True and false churches, we review the beginnings of each.

True and False Vine Review

Recall the parable Jesus teaches in Matthew chapter 13. A man had sown good seed in the field. After this, an enemy came and sowed tares in the field. After both seeds began to rise up, the servants of the man asked him if they should uproot the bad. The master said they should leave them until the harvest. Then the tares are to be bound and the wheat is to be gathered into the barn.

This is a parable of the True and false churches. Christ started a good church, the enemy came in and sowed in a false church. Both are left until the end/harvest time. Both rejoice when it rains. Both can look very similar on the outside, but the fruit produced at the end will show the difference.

Deeds of the Nicolaitanes

Now that we know who all the characters are (God, True Church, false church) we review how this enemy began to work in the false church at the beginning age, Ephesus, and we'll follow him through until the final Laodicean Age. He began by deeds of the Nicolaitanes. These deeds would turn into doctrine soon, and culminate with the false church persecuting the true church.

Assignment: Reading: Pages 366 – 369

Questions

- 1) This chapter will trace the _____ and her _____ as given to John by the Spirit of God.
- 2) (True/False) In Revelation it is speaking only to the Bride church. _____
- 3) Both churches/vines believe certain _____ and differ on _____.
- 4) (Yes/No) Will all the true vine be overcome by the false? _____
- 5) (Yes/No) Will all the false be brought into true salvation by the true? _____
- 6) (True/False) The Holy Spirit can fall on unregenerate Christians. _____
- 7) The church began at Pentecost. Does this mean Azusa Street or the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2? _____
- 8) We should depend on God and our leaders together to fulfill God's Word. _____
- 9) Which is easier (expedient) human government or leadership of the Spirit? _____
- 10) "God does not _____ from the _____ of the church as He _____ from Eden. ... He will ever be in the _____ of His Church until the _____."
- 11) *Challenge:* What is the difference between mixture and admixture? _____
- 12) "The _____ of God gave way to the _____ of God because of the _____ of Balaam.
- 13) (True/False) The hatred and blasphemy of Satan comes through Atheists and people who hate God. _____

Memorize: "Not for one moment do I bring a message to the people that they may follow me, or join my church, or start some fellowship and organization."

"If I can accomplish just one thing I will be satisfied. That one thing is to see established a true spiritual relationship between God and men, wherein men become new creations in Christ, filled with His Spirit, and live according to His Word."

Lesson 73 - Summary: A Resume of the Ages

Purpose of this chapter

“...WE HAVE NOT SET FORTH A CONTINUOUS HISTORICAL PATTERN OF THE CHURCH AS MUCH AS WE OUGHT TO HAVE DONE. IT IS, THEREFORE, OUR PURPOSE NOW TO TAKE THIS CHAPTER, AND BEGINNING WITH THE EPHESIAN AGE TRACE THROUGH ALL AGES THE CHURCH AND HER HISTORY AS GIVEN TO JOHN BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.” (PAGE 366/419 P1)

“NOW AS THIS CONCLUDING CHAPTER WAS GIVEN IN ORDER TO TRACE THE TWO CHURCHES AND TWO SPIRITS FROM PENTECOST TO THEIR CONSUMMATION...” (PAGE 377/432 P57)

In this lesson, we will trace the three manifestations of the devil’s spirit, as it goes from depth to depth. Remember, the first few ages the devil was having his revival in Nicolaitanism, Balaamism, and the teaching of Jezebel. Then came the dark ages, and after that, in the last three ages, we had justification, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These are the two spirits in the framework of the Christian church. Each spirit goes deeper as it progresses whether it's the Spirit of the True Church or the spirit of the false. So, we look again in quick succession at the three manifestations of that false church spirit. Remember, this isn't atheistic or worshipping Satan, this is a religious but false spirit.

Nicolaitanes takes hold

Local church bodies being sovereign is surely what the prophet taught us. One church, or one man does not have authority over how other churches operate. Why? So that the Holy Spirit is free to lead each individual. But the deeds of the Nicolaitanes began to try to have influence over more than just a local church. No doubt it looked wonderful, probably some very talented and gifted minister that many trusted. But soon, that pattern began to be adopted. The leadership of the Holy Spirit began to be usurped by the leadership of man, until those ideas were taught as a doctrine of the church. Nicolaitanism had taken hold, and men began to rule the church instead of the Holy Spirit.

Balaamism

With that accomplished the false spirit began the two steps within the doctrine of Balaam

- 1) Talk things over
- 2) Worship together

Now, the True Church was not as affected by Nicolaitanism as the false. So the false spirit, began to try to bring them together. “We’re all Christians, right? Let's get together and just talk about our differences. Iron sharpens iron and all that!” It sounded innocent so they got together. Then it was proposed that they worship together. The true believer has no business in these situations.

We should stop for a moment and look at this statement, *“The next step would be worshipping together, and of course, a little pressure from the host usually makes the guests go a lot further than they intended.”*

Wow! Have you ever been in a situation where *“a little pressure”* caused you to do things you never thought you would do? It is good to reflect on these times we have erred, and how they were caused, so that we may not make the same mistake again!

So, these Nicolaitanes, under the guise of unity, began the process of trying to bind the True Church to them, by getting them to willfully disbelieve. Many fell by this deception.

Jezebel

So, now that men are leading *“the church”* and not local assemblies being led by the Holy Ghost, they are all under one banner – but it's not Jesus Christ. Because there is a hierarchy, they can easily spread false doctrine to the people.

That's what Jezebel did. With the combining of religious and political powers, there was the system and the force to teach the people whatever false doctrine she wished. If the political power wanted something taught, the religious power taught it. If the religious power needed to kill off a God fearing man that wouldn't be quiet, the political power killed him.

Of course, we can see the fruits of these three depths of manifestations of the false spirit in the Dark Ages: *darkness, misery, poverty, illiteracy and death*. Not the picture you want from a *“church”* is it?

Assignment: Reading: Pages 369 – 373

Questions

- 1) "The separation of the clergy from the laity grew from the Biblical truth of _____ (Shepherds of _____ flocks) ruling the flock by the _____ to the _____."
- 2) "Even within the _____ men whom God had called as _____ were holding that title to mean a little more than just a _____ responsibility."
- 3) "The clergy was always looking to _____ plus _____ ... we find that the _____ was spotted with _____."
- 4) Balaam gave advice in two steps
 - a. Get together and _____
 - b. Worship together and of course a little pressure _____
- 5) Nicolaitan doctrine was _____ of the clergy. Balaamism is the _____ of the people to their _____ and worship in order to hold them.
- 6) Nicolaitanism is _____
- 7) Balaamism is _____
- 8) Nicolaitanism, Balaamism, and Jezebel are not three different spirits but the same spirit going from _____ to _____.

Memorize: "Not for one moment do I bring a message to the people that they may follow me, or join my church, or start some fellowship and organization."

"If I can accomplish just one thing I will be satisfied. That one thing is to see established a true spiritual relationship between God and men, wherein men become new creations in Christ, filled with His Spirit, and live according to His Word."

Lesson 74 - Summary: A Resume of the Ages

Purpose of this chapter

“NOW AS THIS CONCLUDING CHAPTER WAS GIVEN IN ORDER TO TRACE THE TWO CHURCHES AND TWO SPIRITS FROM PENTECOST TO THEIR CONSUMMATION...” (PAGE 377/432 P57)

The wheat returns

Let us not forget our parable from Matthew 13, about the wheat and tares. As we continue through history quickly in this last chapter of the Church Age Book, we continue through this parable. The seeds have been planted, both good and bad, but now we are nearing harvest time. When the wheat begins to mature and the servants ready themselves to bind the tares, but gather the wheat into the barn.

Where the devil had Nicolaitanism, Balaamism, and Jezebel teaching (3 depths of the same Spirit), God will now begin, in the fifth through seventh ages, to have three depths (or should we say heights!), to His Spirit through justification, sanctification, and baptism of the Holy Ghost.

As we've studied, God sent a messenger, by the name of Martin Luther, to start a *reformation*. It wasn't *resurrection* or a *restoration*, but it was a beginning of a new blade of wheat.

Luther brought out a message of *justification*, but the people failed to throw off the Nicolaitan doctrine, and they organized and died.

Wesley then brought out a message of *sanctification*, but the people failed to throw off the Nicolaitan doctrine, and they organized and died.

Isn't it sad that this happened? How diligent we must be to learn from this history, and to hear our messenger as he cried "*Come out of her my people*". Don't allow Nicolaitanism in our ranks. Don't allow in your life the ease of merely listening and following what the pastor says. Don't ever allow ANYONE to usurp the Holy Spirit in your life as an individual. Follow the WORD that God sends through the messenger.

Slowing of Growth – Increase in Ripening.

Finally, we come to the present time. The wheat is becoming ripe for harvest. The shuck is pulling away, and the original seed that was planted is now being shown.

We realize however, that in this process, the wheat stops growing. If you were to put a stop motion camera on the wheat when it first came up out of the ground, you would see changes every day. Now that we are near the time of harvest, the change is almost unnoticeable. The seed isn't *growing* anymore; it is *ripening*.

So too, are the believers in the church. The revivals of the first and second great awakening are not seen anymore. The numbers of people coming to Christ in our day are very low. This is no longer the time of *growing*, but of *ripening*.

Ripening Agents

Both the tares and the wheat are being brought to maturity. The tares have false teachers everywhere, spewing out their various doctrines and signs, that are against the revealed Word of God. The wheat has a prophet-messenger, with a vindicated ministry, that has come to reveal the Truth. The Bride matures in the WORD.

Laodicean Age: Our Age

At this point it would be good to review our timeline again. Don't forget this isn't some brilliantly crafted fable. This is GOD's WORD revealing History. As we have learned in previous lessons, God showed John all these things on the Isle of Patmos. John wrote them down, in the symbol form he saw, so they could be in the Word. No one understood them fully, until the last days, as John wrote in the book of Revelation, there would come a seventh angel to reveal all the mysteries. We now have the *revelation* of what is now *history*, that was *foretold* in the *symbols*. No, this isn't just a story; it is a *living history* that YOU are a part of.

Binding the Tares

Of course, at the end of the maturing of wheat, it is time for harvest. The instructions from the Master in Matthew 13 was to bind the tares first. Earlier Brother Branham told us what that was:

“THE ECUMENICAL MOVE WILL BIND THE TARE CHURCHES TOGETHER, FOR THE TARES MUST BE BOUND FIRST, AND THOUGH THEIR END IS BURNING, THEY ARE NOT BURNED AT THEIR BINDING BUT ARE RESERVED TO A LATER DATE, WHICH IS AT THE END OF THE THOUSAND YEARS, OR THE SECOND RESURRECTION.”

Assignment: Reading: Pages 373 – 377

Questions

- 1) Why didn't Luther's age launch out very far in the Word of God? _____

- 2) "It was not a _____ but a _____. Neither was it a _____."
- 3) The false vine was shown up for what it was: _____
- 4) Denominations hold people in _____ pastures.
- 5) The Lutheran Age was the _____. The Wesleyan Age was the _____.
The Laodicean Age is the _____ of gathering ...
- 6) "Have you noticed that in the harvest time, though there is a real _____ in the _____, there is consequently a slowing of _____ until there is no _____?"
- 7) How many turned to God after the door was shut on the ark in Noah's day? _____
- 8) Who is bringing the tares to maturity? _____
- 9) Who is bringing the wheat to maturity? _____
- 10) The Wheat will hear the prophet messenger as the _____ heard _____.
- 11) (Yes/No) Will the people envision that Rome will be the head? _____
- 12) This image will try to keep the Bride from _____ and _____ etc.
- 13) "God will catch away His Bride for the great _____."

Memorize: "Not for one moment do I bring a message to the people that they may follow me, or join my church, or start some fellowship and organization."

"If I can accomplish just one thing I will be satisfied. That one thing is to see established a true spiritual relationship between God and men, wherein men become new creations in Christ, filled with His Spirit, and live according to His Word."

Lesson 75 - Summary: A Resume of the Ages

Purpose of this chapter

"NOW AS THIS CONCLUDING CHAPTER WAS GIVEN IN ORDER TO TRACE THE TWO CHURCHES AND TWO SPIRITS FROM PENTECOST TO THEIR CONSUMMATION..." (PAGE 377/432 P57)

Former and Latter Rain

As we continue our type of wheat and tares, we come to more harvest terminology. Brother Branham begins to talk about the *teaching* and *harvest rain*. Perhaps you're unfamiliar with where this comes from, so let's bring you up to speed!

"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you." (Joel 2:23-25)

Now, you may understand how this is talking about the restoration of the Spirit. There are rains that come just before harvest time. An earlier (*former*) rain in the spring and a later (*latter*) rain after the dry summer. This is a type of the Spirit being poured out, just at the turn of the 20th century, at Azusa street. The gifts, like speaking in tongues, began to be poured out among the people. This was that early rain. Many did not understand, and thought that this was the restoration ("*and I will restore...*").

So, as we read, this is the Scripture and concept that are being referred to.

Deposing the Spirit from the throne

Let's look at the times in this chapter Brother Branham used the word "*depose*" which means "*to remove from office or position*"

"NICOLAITANISM IS ORGANIZATION, HUMANIZING THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH, AND THEREBY DEPOSING THE SPIRIT." (PAGE 372/426 P32)

"IF VICAR OF CHRIST MEANS 'INSTEAD OF CHRIST' OR 'IN PLACE OF' OR 'ON BEHALF OF GOD' THEN THE POPE WAS CALLING HIMSELF THE HOLY GHOST, OR DEPOSING THE HOLY GHOST, ACTING FOR HIM." (PAGE 379/433 P61)

This is what the devil has been doing since the battle in heaven, before he was cast out. Deposing God; desiring worship for himself. He doesn't need you to worship him directly, but if the devil can get someone substituted for Christ in your life, who operates as a vicar, or on behalf of God, he has deposed the Spirit from His throne.

Notice the contrast from the prophet-messenger of the last day. Given so much revelation, it would be so easy to let him completely guide you. Yet, as we read to the last couple of paragraphs, we see not that he was looking for a following, but that his aim was for you to know Christ. Yes, follow the prophet, follow the revelation he brought us, but do so that you may have a personal walk with God!

This is why your task for this last chapter is to memorize this small selection:

Memorize: *“Not for one moment do I bring a message to the people that they may follow me, or join my church, or start some fellowship and organization.”*

“If I can accomplish just one thing I will be satisfied. That one thing is to see established a true spiritual relationship between God and men, wherein men become new creations in Christ, filled with His Spirit, and live according to His Word.”

Never let the Spirit be deposed off the throne of your life. Have a true spiritual relationship with Him!

Assignment: Reading: Pages 377 - 381

Questions

- 1) What is the true church going to return to being in this age? _____
- 2) What proved that the pouring out of the Spirit around the turn of the 20th century was not the REAL restoration? (Three things) _____

- 3) What spirit came back upon the false church? _____
- 4) In calling himself the Vicar of Christ, the pope does what to the Holy Ghost in the lives of people? _____

- 5) How are the people of God made ready? _____
- 6) Will God plant a new church? _____
- 7) After the former rain comes the harvest (latter) rain. After the teaching rain comes? _____

- 8) What argument does the false church use? _____
- 9) Did Luther have the Spirit of God? _____
- 10) *Challenge:* Why do you think Luther and Wesley didn't preach all of the things that the Laodicean Age messenger did? _____

- 11) "This is the age of _____ and this is the age of _____
_____ it is the age of the _____."
- 12) Brother Branham warns us to hear _____ at this time.

Congratulations! You finished reading the Church Age Book!

I hope you enjoyed this study, please consider after a year or two reading this important book a second time. It will be well worth it to you.

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