

PROPHETIC REVELATION

*Q*UESTIONS & *A*NSWERS

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He that hath an ear, *let him hear!*

PROPHETIC*REVELATION

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The Eagle screams...



...the Dove leads.



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# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

by Richard I.s.Gan

**Q:** *I am disturbed about some preachers' opinions that an egg of Mary was used in the conception of Jesus. Could you please expound a little on the subject?*

**A:** *"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." (Matt.1:18)*

The word "birth" comes from the Greek word "genesis" meaning "beginning, origin, procreation".

The contention that Jesus was born of Mary's natural egg which was fertilized by the sperm introduced by the Holy Spirit is to necessitate that Jesus was a true earthly MAN. This teaching actually tears away the core of truth that Jesus was the ONLY BEGOTTEN (MONOGENE) OF GOD. Just to support the teaching, this verse of Luke 1:35 is quoted: *"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."*

The overshadowing of the Virgin was not to purge or to sanctify her egg for fertilization by the sperm which was introduced by the Holy Spirit; it was the power of God coming upon her to bring about the *genesis* of the Manchild (Matt.1:20). She was chosen to be the 'mother' of the Child. As both the sperms and eggs of mankind hold the genetic traits of the fallen nature, and as the new creation of the fallen mankind can only take place by a spiritual rebirth, it would certainly be contrary for God to take one of Mary's eggs and rid it of its inborn genetic traits for the conception of His Son. Hence, Matthew 1:18 states clearly how the BIRTH of Jesus Christ came about — ***a genesis to bring about a new creation. A new creation requires all things new.***

Now, the particular expression – "seed of the woman" – needs to be understood. *"And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen.3:14-15).* A woman does not have seeds in her womb. She receives seeds that are sown in her womb. Once a seed is received a conception takes place. The expression speaks exclusively of a conception that is beyond the natural. Let me illustrate: Joseph married Josephine and

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birthed a son, Joe. Joe is the son of Joseph and Josephine but he is the seed of Joseph. When Josephine was pregnant with Joe, she is said to be carrying the seed of Joseph. However, by term of reference, the seed of Joseph is rightly Josephine's too for she carried it.

God had already pre-ordained a NEW CREATION for man even before the Fall of Mankind. A new creation is **not** a re-creation. It has nothing to do with the flesh. It has to do with the spirit for *“that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:6). Hence, it is clear that *“flesh is flesh”* and *“spirit is spirit”*.

So then, when the Spirit of God overshadowed Mary He planted His SEED in her. This SEED is the WORD OF GOD (cf. Luke 8:11). It has LIFE in itself when planted as an egg. That's why the Word of God is the Seed of God. This is to bring about a NEW CREATION. It has nothing to do with the natural flesh cell (egg) of Mary for she was a sinner and her flesh was also corrupt.

To teach that God sanctified an egg cell of Mary so that He could introduce His “sperm cell” would be to teach, not NEW CREATION but REGENERATION. Certainly, the definitions of the two terms are very similar but there is a marked difference. A true worshipper who is born again with the baptism of the Holy Spirit has *“a new heart”* and *“a new spirit”* (Ezek.18:31; 36:26) will receive a glorified body at the Lord's coming. However, for anyone who has to live through the Age of Regeneration and subject himself/herself to Christ's *“rod of iron”* rule will continue on into eternal life in the New Heaven and New Earth but he/she will not have a glorified body.

Take a look at this passage:

KJV 1 Cor.15:36: *Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:*

37: *And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:*

38: *But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.*

39: *All flesh is not the same flesh:...*

Here's the NIV rendition:

1 Cor.15:36: *How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.*

37: *When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else.*

38: *But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.*

39: *All flesh is not the same:...*

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Therefore, what kind of body did God give to Jesus Christ? The Word, which was God, was just a seed of a SPIRITUAL kind. As It was to bring forth ALL THINGS NEW in the life of all who could believe, It was given its own body totally handmade by the Almighty Father outside that of Mary's own body. It had to be His Own body, not a "hybrid" in any way, not even a taint of fallen flesh. *"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed"* (1 Pet.2:24).

One question that normally pops up to defend the usage of "Mary's egg" is this: *"If Mary's egg was not involved, how could Jesus ever feel the pain and suffering of fallen man?"*

This is quite a presumption that Jesus could not. Before Jesus came, did Yahweh our God not feel our pain and suffering? Need God be a man to feel such? And did not the Father show that by identifying with us in His Son?

Thank God that we are *"being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever"* (1 Pet.1:23).

So, without doubt, both the sperm and the egg, which brought about the conception and birth of Jesus Christ, were totally the creation of God. Jesus Christ is the PURE SEED of God. He is the MONOGENE.

**Q: *Is it true that you do not believe in reading Bro. Branham's books and that you discourages others from reading them?***

**A:** Several believers that I had met over the past many years had asked me this question. It is obvious that these believers received information based either on a rumour or from someone who claimed to have heard, intentionally or unintentionally, the utterances from my mouth. Instead of coming to me to clarify what they claimed to have heard, they chose to go around and spread deception. It is a lie. The practice of deception is iniquity, and God hates iniquities above sins. Anyone who had read my books or listened to my sermons would know that the above accusation is a lie. Ask any co-labourer in the Vineyard of God who is close to me and he will tell you that the above accusation is also a lie.

When I came into the message of Bro. Branham in 1971, I not only read and listened to the messages, I began also to distribute THE SPOKEN WORD books and taped sermons. I also had a library where the believers of the fellowship could borrow. I have encouraged the believers to read and to listen to the messages. When the VOGR started charging for the books, we no longer received books from them for distribution. Some of the believers now have them on CDs or mp3 players.

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Those who are accusing me do so on the reason that I am not like them. Why should I be like them? They want me to believe that THE SPOKEN WORD books and taped sermons of Wm. Branham are THE ABSOLUTE, that without them, there's no revelation gotten. I had been told personally that only by Bro. Branham can one receive revelation of the Word of God. That's a devilish lie. On the contrary, revelation of Truth does not come by men; it is God who gives the revelation. It is not the prophet (or any preacher). If it is, then Israel would have had received their Messiah a long time ago because they have had hundreds of prophets. Nevertheless, these accusers believe in searching for Truth in the books of Bro. Branham instead of the Sacred Scripture. One particular reason is that they believe Bro. Branham had ALL TRUTHS and MYSTERIES of God in the Bible. Hence, they are searching THE SPOKEN WORD books and taped sermons for those "revealed mysteries". Like Theologians, they are dissecting every statement and every word of Branham and many have come up with very strange revelations, such as THE THUNDERS ARE REVEALED; THE RAPTURE HAS TAKEN PLACE; WILLIAM BRANHAM IS THE CHRIST; WILLIAM BRANHAM IS COMING BACK TO PREACH AGAIN BEFORE THE RAPTURE, etc.

A person can read, or listen to, a message by Bro. Branham, or Pastor S., or Apostle J., etc. yet it is God who anoints the person and quickens his spirit to receive truth if there is any in the message to reveal to him. And the revelation of the truth is taken back to the WORD to where the source is. This is what the Spirit of God will do. I have received revelation from the Lord in different ways, reading or listening to Branham's message, listening to a preacher's sermon in a church service or on tape, during a ministerial meeting, reading some Christian books, and listening to testimonies of believers. God quickened me to what I have read or heard and then flashed me back to His Sacred Scripture for the source. There in His **IN-BREATHED** Word, He revealed the REALITY of His TRUTH. It is not some QUOTES or the mere words of something that was said by Branham in which a believer (especially a preacher) can opine on them and exclaim: "It's a revelation!" Unless it is proven and backed up by the ONE TRUTH SOURCE – THE ABSOLUTE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD, it is not a revelation. It is only a worthless opinion, at worst, a false doctrine. Examples of such false doctrines are THE TWO SOULS, THE RAPTURE HAS TAKEN PLACE, and THE RETURN MINISTRY OF WILLIAM BRANHAM.

Bro. Branham's messages point us back to the WORD of God. Read them, listen to them, study them. However, without the **IN-BREATHED WORD**, you have nothing because you are not standing on the **ROCK**.

Here is an example where a believer can make a "revelation" of what Bro. Branham said. Read the quotes carefully. They speak of Enoch and

## ***QUESTIONS & ANSWERS - 2***

Noah preaching at the same time and that when Noah saw Enoch taken up, it was time for him to start on the ark.

### **THE.GREAT.COMING.REVIVAL.AND.THE.OUTPOURING.OF.THE.HOLY.SPIRIT** CHICAGO.IL SUNDAY\_ 54-0718A

E-20 Now, as I've just said that the antediluvian destruction, Noah was the sign. And Noah had a sign to start on. When he seen Enoch was taken up, Enoch was taken up, then Noah...was time Noah to start, for he knew that that would be the sign of his beginning and then the end would be near.

And Enoch, of course, was the...a type of the raptured group of the church. And Noah is a type of the carried over or the elect of the Jews that will be carried through the tribulation period. And we're now living in that day.

### **THE.JUNCTION.OF.TIME** JEFF.IN SUNDAY\_ 56-0115

E-13 And notice, back there in that evil day just before the destruction, when God had a man out preaching the Gospel, a poor man, humble man, not very much of the world, but a man who had a heart to listen to God: Noah. There was Noah and Enoch preaching at the same time. And if you notice over in Revelations 11, it said, "I'll give power unto My two witnesses in the last day." Two witnesses again in the last day, Revelations 11...And they performed signs and wonders among the people.

### **THE.LAMB's.BOOK.OF.LIFE** JEFF.IN SUNDAY\_ 56-0603

E-28 Enoch...the...but...a Noah...Noah was a type that was carried over like the sleeping virgin. But Enoch was translated just before the tribulation struck. And Enoch was took up, and was found not, because God took him: the type of the going forth of the church. And Noah watched him. When he seen Enoch go, he knew it was time to enter the ark, for to be carried through the tribulation.

### **THE.REVELATION.THAT.WAS.GIVEN.TO.ME** SAN.JUAN.PR WEDNESDAY\_ 60-0210

E-22 Abraham was looking for something. That's what the church, the believer, is today, watching...watching for something. He knew the time was growing close.

Just like Noah, watching Enoch. When Enoch went up, Noah knowed that the storm was close.

### **THE.REVELATION.OF.JESUS.CHRIST** JEFF.IN ROJC 9-67 SUNDAY\_ 60-1204M

<sup>397</sup> And now, Noah was a type of the Jews, but Enoch went home without dying. And when Noah seen Enoch go, he knowed it was time to start on that ark. That's right. That was Noah's sign, when Enoch went home. And as soon as the Gentile church is taken away, then He makes Hissself known to Israel. See? That's right.

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Now, a preacher may teach from these quotes a “revelation” that Enoch and Noah were real pals – great grandfather and great grandson; that Enoch communicated to Noah of the judgment to come and told Noah to be ready for the ark when he was gone. My question: **Is the scenario possible?** Yes.

BUT, is it possible **ACCORDING TO THE IN-BREATHED SCRIPTURE?** The answer is **NO**. Why not? Enoch never saw the birth of Noah. Therefore it is no revelation. Check the **WORD**. Bro. Branham made a mistake. (*“How could you say that, Bro. Gan?”* Defensive Branhamites have often jumped on me with that. To them, Branham, the prophet, made no mistake. He is **THE ABSOLUTE**. If these statements of Branham are *not* mistakes, then the statements in the Holy Bible inspired by Holy Spirit are mistakes. Take your pick.)

Related topics:

**“How some Christians view and distort William Branham’s Teachings”**

**“WHAT IS THE MESSAGE OF THE HOUR?”**

***Q: Bro. Gan, I found this on a website and I believe that Bro. Branham had every intention of preaching on the Seven Thunders. What do you say to it?***

**THE GOD OF THIS EVIL AGE** (1965-08-01M, Jeffersonville, IN)

<sup>(16)</sup> Now, in doing this, I have come here for the purpose of teaching the last vials, last seven vials, and the last seven trumpets, and the last seven thunders of the Book of Revelations, tying them together in this hour that we’re now living to follow the opening of the Seven Seals, the Seven Church Ages. So we couldn’t get room to do it, so I...I hope that soon as I can, we’ll can get a place sufficient for that either here, or in Louisville, New Albany, or either put up a tent, so we can just stay as long as the Lord leads us to do.

But in this now, I took this opportunity to express to the people my belief and faith in God, and then bringing you to the hour that we’re living in. And by this, it’s not appointed to any certain person, creeds, whatever it might be; it’s just as I see God’s Word. And last Sunday we had a very fine outpouring of the Spirit upon the Word. It was very lengthy, and I hated to stay that long; but yet, we don’t know what time that we’re going to meet for our last time. And we must...want to be; I want to be, rather, as Paul said of old, *“I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”* Jesus said He kept nothing back from His disciples. And as I, so busy with trying to stay under the anointing of the Holy Spirit to find what the...the hour...the Message of the hour is, I sometimes fail to get out and do my duties as a servant of Christ, as a minister. But I’ve got several men who try to help me to do this, to which I’m thankful for, all my minister brothers.



## **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS - 2**

### **AND KNOWETH IT NOT** (1965-08-15, Jeffersonville, IN)

(22-5) Then he stretched forth his rod at the command of God and said, "Let frogs come up and cover the earth." And the frogs come till they heaped them up in piles, and stink was everywhere, maybe forty or fifty feet high of frogs. They were in the cupboard of...of Pharaoh. They were in the...Turn down the sheets and there'd be five hundred frogs under the sheet, under the bed, in the rugs. Everywhere they went was frogs, frogs, frogs. Where did they come from? God the Creator is sovereign. What He says, He will do.

And He said there would be hideous sights upon the earth: locusts with hair like women, long hair to haunt them women that cut their hair. Teeth like lions, stingers in their tails like scorpions... They will torment men months.

Just wait till we get in to open those plagues and seals and them seven thunders. Watch what takes place. Oh, brother, you better get to Goshen while there's time to get to Goshen. Don't pay any attention to this outside.

### **CHRIST IS REVEALED IN HIS OWN WORD** (1965-08-22M, Jeffersonville, IN)

(19) And to see this nervous age that we're living in... And last week's tapes, I think, will reveal to you the great hideous things that we're going to speak on one of these days when we can get a place sufficient, of the opening of those last plagues to be poured out upon the earth...those Vials, rather, pouring out of the Vials, and the Seven Thunders... And those hideous sights that's coming upon the earth...

(149) But we've got one of the most dreadful times to go through that ever laid before human beings. Now, I'm just waiting for the hour and when we can get...everybody can get a chance where you can get off from work and spend a few days, and we can get set up somewhere where I can speak on those plagues and things that's to fall in the days, and throw about two or three weeks together, and bring that together, if the Lord let's me live to do it and will inspire me to do so. See how those things will be dropped in and those thunders, then you'll find out what that man and them people has been dreaming about and all these things there; it'll come to pass. See? You'll notice what them revealed, that great thunder a-coming forth out of the...out of the skies. Now... Of course, the whole bunch of you, you know that I know what that...what that means. You see? And... But let's just wait till the time comes (You see?) for it to...?... Now... And it'll be more in season.

**A:** Well, I say "amen" to it. I believe the same. I believe that Bro. Branham wanted to preach on the **Seven Thunders** and that he believed that God would reveal to him those things just like God did in his preaching of the Seven Seals. But he didn't get to preach it. However, if Bro. Branham got to preaching the Seven Thunders, he would only able to tell us what those Seven Thunders are? BUT he would not be able to tell us what they had uttered because **WHATEVER THEY HAD UTTERED WERE**

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SEALED UP. They were not even written. And no preacher can preach anything that is not written. (If the Lord had told the Apostle Paul not to write all the revelations He had given him, but to seal up all that he had received, then no preacher can preach any truth that Paul had.)

This is what Branham said earlier:

“Wait till them seven thunders utter their voices to that group who really can take the Word of God and hand it there. It’ll slice and cut. And they can close the heavens; they can shut this or do that, whatever they want to. Glory.” (**THE FOURTH SEAL**. JEFF.IN THURSDAY 63-0321)

Believers need to differentiate **THE SEVEN THUNDERS FROM THEIR UTTERANCES**. Go to:

i) **What Are The Mysterious Seven Thunders of Revelation 10?**

ii) **What William Branham said about The Seven Thunders.**

### **Q: WHAT ARE THE MYSTERIOUS SEVEN THUNDERS OF REVELATION 10?**

*“Bro. Gan, there are some believers here (in Zambia) who believe that the Seven Thunders are now uttering their voices to the Bride. They said that the Seven Thunders are the Seven Angels who came to Bro. Branham in 1963 and had uttered their voices already. Please enlighten us.”*

**A:** There have been much speculation about the Seven Thunders of Revelation 10. These are the seven common views:

1. The Seven Thunders are the Seven Seals when they are revealed.
2. The Seven Thunders are the Seven Virtues of Christ which a believer must manifest or “thunder” forth.
3. The Seven Thunders are the second set of Seven Seals which seal the back of the book (scroll). They are not the Seven Seals which are on the inside of the book.
4. The Seven Thunders are Seven specific Messages of William Branham. The following three are presumed to be parts of the seven: **“The Token”**, **“Marriage and Divorce”** and **“The Serpent Seed”**.
5. The Seven Thunders are the Seven Spirits (Angels) who came and uttered their voices through William Branham in 1963 when they opened up the revelation of the Seven Seals to him.
6. The Seven Thunders are the Seven Spirits who are now uttering their voices through the 5-Fold Ministry to give her Rapturing Faith.
7. The Seven Thunders are Seven Men who have yet to appear to utter their voices of things which the Apostle John heard but were not allowed to be written. What they utter will give the Bride her Rapturing Faith.

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To begin to understand the Seven Thunders, we need to first know that there are SEVEN SPIRITS which *“are before the throne”* of Yahweh. Throughout the Gospel Age these SEVEN SPIRITS are the EYES of the Lord, His very fountain of Life, through which God works to bring about a redeemed, perfect people for Himself. These SEVEN SPIRITS took the form of Angelic Beings. And they have SEVEN SPECIFIC WORKS to perform, namely:

1. Seven Stars.
2. Seven Candlesticks.
3. Seven Seals.
4. Seven Horns and Seven Eyes on the Lamb.
5. Seven Thunders.
6. Seven Trumpets.
7. Seven Vials (Bowls)

Now, all these are seven different works assigned to the SEVEN SPIRITS. Each one is different from the others. And only in two of the seven works do they UTTER THEIR VOICES (that is, open their mouths to speak) when they are a) STARS and b) THUNDERS. Notice that there were three greetings the Apostle John penned at the beginning of his writing the revelation of Jesus Christ to the Seven Churches – i) *“from him which is, and which was, and which is to come”*, ii) *“and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne”*, iii) *“and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth”* (Rev.1:4-5). Then as the Church Age closes, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes in the *parousia* to get His Bride ready, there appear also the three groups of beings (Rev.10).

The first 4 of the 7 views listed above are purely foolish speculations. There is not one Scripture foundation for such teachings; they are just opinions of foolish men. Views 5 and 6 are misconstrued from a misunderstanding of certain words in the Scriptures. We shall look at them.

It is clear from the Scriptures that when those *“SEVEN THUNDERS utter their voices”* the *“mystery of God”* (dispensation of the grafting in of the Gentiles to the Church [read Rom.11; 16:25; Eph.3]) would be finished and the Gospel goes back to Israel. Since this is true, how could those SEVEN THUNDERS have *“uttered their voices”* since the *“mystery of God”* is still unfinished for the fullness of the Gentile has yet to be (Rom.11:25)?

To justify the view that the SEVEN THUNDERS had uttered their voices, the teaching twisted the words *“mystery of God should be finished”* to be ***not*** as a mystery showing a dispensation in which the Gentile being

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grafted to the Church would end (finished, accomplished) but as a mystery concerning the said dispensation itself being revealed to the Bride. Hence, the revelation of the *“mystery of God”* is considered revealed and finished, and the Bride can now be perfected by the 5-fold ministry. This is one foolish misinterpretation of Scriptures. The verse of Scripture does not say the *“mystery of God should be **revealed**”*. It clearly says the *“mystery of God should be **finished**”*, meaning that the *“mystery of God should be accomplished (or concluded, run its course)”*.

Further foolish notion is read into the Scriptures such that in 1963 when the SEVEN SPIRITS (ANGELS) came to the 7th Church Age Messenger, William Branham, they became known as the SEVEN THUNDERS because they *“uttered their voices”* concerning the revelation of the SEVEN SEALS. It is then interpreted that what things Bro. Branham brought forth during that period were the SEVEN THUNDERS uttering *“their voices”*, and that *“their voices”* are here with us today – the voices of Paul, Irenaeus, St. Martin, Columba, Luther and Wesley, and including Branham. Through Bro. Branham are those seven voices of the SEVEN ANGELS (MESSENGERS) of the SEVEN CHURCH AGES uttered and heard in our days. And what utterances that John heard, but was told not to write, were those mysteries hidden under the SEVEN SEALS. So, we see view 5 is almost similar to view 1.

View 6 is just a continuation of view 5. It is interpreted that through the 5-fold ministry the voices of those SEVEN THUNDERS are being heard today.

So, what is wrong with views 5 and 6?

There are several misinterpretations. Firstly, it is already wrong to **equate** the utterances of the SEVEN THUNDERS that John heard to be the various mysteries brought forth in the revealing of the SEVEN SEALS. What Bro. Branham brought forth in 1963 were the revelations of those SEVEN SEALS that were opened to John in his visions on the Isle of Patmos. Bro. Branham was given the revelations of those SEVEN SEALS by interpreting what were seen and written by John in his days. Yes, Bro. Branham said that each of those SEVEN ANGELS came every night and revealed to him what each seal was about. He taught that to the Church but those teachings are **not** the utterances of the SEVEN ANGELS. He taught the history of the Church and gave the interpretations of those symbols under each SEAL that John saw in his vision.

Secondly, the vision of Revelation 10 clearly shows an OPEN BOOK (SCROLL) in the hand of the Mighty Angel as He comes down from Heaven. This OPEN BOOK is the same book in Revelation 5 that is sealed with SEVEN SEALS. Therefore, how could the utterances of the SEVEN THUNDERS be the mysteries hid in the SEVEN SEALS since all the

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seals are already opened even before the SEVEN THUNDERS UTTERED THEIR VOICES? **The SEVEN SEALS are revealed BEFORE the SEVEN THUNDERS uttered their voices.** That much is clear.

Thirdly, to teach that the “*mystery of God*” refers to something other than God grafting in the wild olive branches (Gentiles) to the natural olive tree (Jewish Church) is a serious error. It completely distorts the Word of God. Did not Paul receive the revelation about the “*mystery of God*”? Read Rom.11; 16:25 and Eph.3 again. Paul had that revelation of what God had declared through His O.T. prophets concerning the light of the Gospel going to the Gentiles (cf. Isa.62:6; 49:6; 60:3; Amos 9:12). This “*mystery of God*” would be completed when the last Gentile elect is grafted in and the Rapture has taken place. Then God will take the Gospel back to Israel.

Fourthly, not understanding the phrase “*uttered their voices*” only adds to the erroneous teaching. In trying to prove that the SEVEN THUNDERS had “*utter their voices*” back in 1963 and that the Bride is hearing “*their voices*” today, the Scripture verse of Acts 13:27 is used to force-feed that interpretation.

Acts 13:27: “*For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.*”

Anyone with common sense will know the vast difference between the phrase “*the voices of the prophets which are read*” and the “*seven thunders uttered their voices*”. It is true that the various voices of the O.T. prophets, though they are dead, were heard every sabbath day by the Jews but the Jews **heard what was read** out of the Sacred Scrolls (Scriptures) – the **written words** of the prophets, they **did not hear what was uttered** – **spoken words** of the prophets.

Yes, in a way we are “hearing” what those Church Age Messengers had uttered by reading their sermons and writing. However, the words used in Rev.10:3 – “*seven thunders uttered their voices*” – do not give that meaning. The phrase means the “*seven thunders articulate their words*” or “*seven thunders spoke with their voices*”. The word “**uttered**” is from the Greek word “*laleo*” – to talk.

Let us look at examples in the Holy Bible and compare them with the statement of Acts 13:27. It would not be difficult to notice the difference. Some Old Testament examples are:

\*\* Jdg.11:11: “*Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the LORD in Mizpeh.*” Here the word “uttered” is “*dabar*” – **arrange, speak**, and the word “words” is “*dabar*” – **words spoken**. Simply, “*Jephthah worded his words.*”

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§ 2 Sam.22:13-15: *“Through the brightness before him were coals of fire kindled. The LORD thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered his voice. And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them.”* The word “uttered” is “nathan” – **to give, put, make**, “voice” is “qowl” – **a voice, sound**, (compare to a trumpet sound).

Notice the difference between “dabar” and “qowl”? The former is **“spoken words”**, the latter is **a sound, a voice, drawing attention**. Here’s a few more to help you understand.

\*\* Psa.66:14: *“Which my lips have uttered [memshalah – rule, realm, ruler], and my mouth [peh – puff, blow] hath spoken [dabar – arrange, speak], when I was in trouble.”*

\*\* Neh.6:19: *“Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered [yatsa – to go/bring out] my words [dabar – arrange, speak] to him. And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear.”*

§\*\* Jer.38:20: *“But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver thee. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice [qowl – a voice, sound] of the LORD, which I speak [dabar – arrange, speak] unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live.”* (cf. Ex.23:21-22)

§ Psa.46:6: *“The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered [nathan – give, put, make] his voice [qowl – a voice, sound], the earth melted.”*

§ Jer.48:32-34: *“O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach even to the sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage. And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab, and I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses: none shall tread with shouting; their shouting shall be no shouting. From the cry of Heshbon even unto Elealeh, and even unto Jahaz, have they uttered [nathan – give, put, make] their voice [qowl – a voice, sound], from Zoar even unto Horonaim, as an heifer of three years old: for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate.”*

§ Hab.3:10: *“The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered [nathan – give, put, make] his voice [qowl – a voice, sound], and lifted up his hands on high.”*

§ 1 Sam.7:10: *“And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered [raam – tumble, agitate] with a great thunder [qowl – a voice, sound] on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.”*

Here are some New Testament examples:

§ Rom.8:26: *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we*

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*know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*" The word "uttered" is "alaletos". It means **unspeakable**, as opposed to "laleo" to "talk, speak, i.e. utter words".

\* 1 Cor.14:19: *"Yet in the church I had rather speak [laleo – utter] five words with my understanding, by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."*

\* Heb.5:11: *"Of whom we have many things to say [logos – expression, something said], and hard to be uttered [lego – to lay forth, to relate in words, to mean], seeing ye are dull of hearing."*

Now, look closely at the wordings of Rev.10:3-4 and Acts 13:27.

\* Rev.10:3-4: *"And cried with a loud voice [phone – a tone, an address, saying, language], as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered [laleo – to talk, speak, i.e. utter words] their voices [phone – a tone, an address, saying, language]. And when the seven thunders had uttered [laleo – to talk, speak, i.e. utter words] their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice [phone – a tone, an address, saying, language] from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered [laleo – to talk, speak, i.e. utter words], and write them not."*

§ Acts 13:27: *"For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices [phone – a tone, an address, saying, language] of the prophets which are read [anaginosko – to read, to know again (from ginosko – to know)] every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him."*

Hence, there is no doubt that to hear the voices of the prophets read to us every Sabbath day is not the same as to hear the voices of the prophets spoken directly to us. The former is the hearing of the written words of anointed men who are dead and whose revelations could only be made known to us by the Spirit of God through anointed preaching, but the latter is the hearing of the spoken words of anointed men sent to give us rapturing faith. *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Rom.10:17). And how shall they hear without a preacher?

The prophet Isaiah foretold of the coming of a forerunner to prepare the way of the Lord (Isa.40:3-5). What if the voice (words) of Isaiah (the prophet) was just read every Sabbath day in Jerusalem and John the Baptist did not turn up to utter his voice (speak) to the ears of Israel, would there be a people prepared to receive the Lord? Remember faith comes by hearing the words spoken by God's anointed, not what is written.

Is not it the same with today's organized churches? They read the voices (words) of the prophets and the apostles of God every Sunday. They expound them. Yet, they have fulfilled them in rejecting Him by not

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receiving the Word that came through the Seventh Angel, William Branham. They have once again crucified the Word.

If they cannot receive the prophet they cannot receive the Word. If they cannot receive the Word they cannot be prepared and perfected by the Present 'Ascension Gifts' Ministry. And if they cannot be and are not prepared and perfected then they cannot receive the faith for the translation to receive the Promised Son of God.

**God gave Abraham the words of a promised son.** Abraham believed the promise but the promised son did not come **UNTIL the MESSENGERS** came to him 24 years later and **SPOKE THE WORD!** Abraham heard it. Sarah heard it. Oh, what rapturing faith! Their bodies were transformed! And Abraham received the promised son.

Isaiah prophesied of a Jewish virgin conceiving a child who was to be the Saviour of the world. Those words of Isaiah were read every Sabbath day in Jerusalem. But no matter how long they were read and expounded, the reality of it could never be until a MESSENGER came to the virgin and **SPOKE THE WORD** unto her. Mary was that virgin. She heard the **SPOKEN WORD** uttered to her, she received **IT** and faith changed her body. She received the Promised Son of God.

The Bride of Christ has been hearing the voices of the prophets and the apostles every Sunday. She heard them expounded. She received the revelations of Malachi 4:5-6. She received the MESSENGER and the Word that was sent to restore her back to the Apostolic Word. She returned to the **WORD** and is now being perfected by the Present Truth Ministry of the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers so that she will be fully established in the complete **WORD** of the Lord Jesus Christ and be ready for her home-going. When she "*hath made herself ready*" then she will receive the **PROMISED SON** of God when those **SEVEN THUNDERS** come to utter their voices to her, just as the Beloved John had heard them in his visions on the Isle of Patmos. She will receive her rapturing faith and her body will be transformed – revived, healed, made whole – and then capped by the Christ to be translated to meet Him in the air.

Consider carefully these verses of Scriptures:

*Zech.3:8-10: "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the **BRANCH**. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the **LORD** of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the **LORD** of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand*



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*of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth."*

Sitting face to face with Joshua were several men *"thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at"*. *"These men were marvelous men"* (Lamsa Translation), *"men that are a sign"* (Bethel Edition), *"men of good omen"* (RSV), *"men symbolic of things to come"* (NIV) and *"men who are a sign or omen [types of what is to come]"* (Amp.).

Translator William F. Beck translated the whole verse as *"Please listen, Joshua, O high priest, you and your friends who sit before you. You men stand for something wonderful I will do because I will bring My Servant, the Branch"* (An American Translation). But before Joshua and the men who sat before him was placed a stone with seven eyes and having an inscription on it. (Now all these have compound meaning. And there is a play on the phrase *"engrave the graving thereof"*. Truly, God hides His Truth whilst revealing It.)

Now, what do all these mean prophetically concerning the Church? Simply to show that there is a REVELATION (the *"stone engraved with an engraving"* – *"engrave (Heb: pathach) the engraving"*) placed before our JOSHUA (Jesus Christ the High Priest) and certain men before him shall be the eyes [i.e. watchmen] of that REVELATION. God shall open up or loosen (from the same Hebrew word: *pathach*) the inscription on that stone in the hand of Christ Jesus, not as *'Joshua the High Priest'*, but as *'Zerubbabel the Administrator'* or *'Zerubbabel the Prince'*. In the day of small things (that is, this period of the last generation, not the period of the 2000 years of the Church Age), our ZERUBBABEL shall hold the plummet (of that stone) and together with those seven marvelous men (the seven eyes), who shall rejoice to see it in His hand, *"engrave (Heb: pathach – open wide) the engraving"* and administer that revelation around the world just before God takes the Gospel back to Israel. When the Gospel goes back to Israel those SEVEN SPIRITS (seven eyes) will then blow their TRUMPETS and pour out their VIALS as God deals with her. The Lord will remove her iniquity in one day as the Messiah comes in that day to set up His Kingdom.

***"Bro. Gan, what if there are no seven men?"***

If there are no seven men, then there are no seven men. But what if there are seven men?

If according to all those other views, the SEVEN THUNDERS has already uttered their voices (one way or another), and that the Bride is now receiving rapturing faith, then the Bride has nothing to worry about. Isn't it? But consider this: why is the Bride still here on earth if she had already **received** the voices of the SEVEN THUNDERS since 1963? How long

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does rapturing faith take to work? It's been more than 40 years and the rapturing faith has not produce any effect to translate the Bride.

How soon will a person inherit salvation (eternal life) after he has heard the SPOKEN WORD of life preached to him and he is convicted and he has repented upon receiving the saving faith? Days? Weeks? Months? Years?

So, how long will it take for rapturing faith to work after it is received? Answer the question. (Just remember Abraham and Sarah, and the virgin Mary.)

### **A Word About The Seven Thunders - from the mouth of William Branham: *What William Branham said about the Seven Thunders...***

**...to prepare the Bride for the great translation faith.**

*"Seven thunders of revelation... May He show the Bride how to prepare for the great translation faith."* (THE FIRST SEAL. JEFF.IN MONDAY 63-0318)

**...to get the Bride together for rapturing faith.**

*"And then there's coming forth seven mysterious thunders that's not even written at all. That's right. And I believe that through those seven thunders will be revealed in the last days in order to get the Bride together for rapturing faith; because what we got right now, we...we wouldn't be able to do it."* (THE FIRST SEAL. JEFF.IN MONDAY 63-0318)

**...to utter out something that the little group that He's gathered together will receive a rapturing faith to go in the rapture when He comes.**

*"Is it time? Is the mystery all finished? Has the sounding all over? Is that really them seven thunders fixing to utter out something that the little group that He's gathered together will receive a rapturing faith to go in the rapture when He comes; for we'll be changed as quick as those Angels come: in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and shall be caught up together with those that is asleep to meet the Lord in the air."* (SIR, IS THIS THE SIGN OF THE END? JEFF.IN SUNDAY 62-1230E)

**...seven thunders will be revealed to the church, how to go.**

*"Everyone of you, cleanse all your heart. Lay aside everything, every weight. Keep it out of your way. Don't let nothing bother you. Don't be scared. There's nothing to be scared about. If Jesus is coming, it's a very...it's a moment that the whole world has groaned and cried for. If it's something breaking forth now, for a new coming...a new coming of a new gift or something, it'll be wonderful. If it's coming time that the revelation of the seven thunders will be revealed to the church, how to go, I don't know. I have just stated what I saw..."* (SIR, IS THIS THE SIGN OF THE END? JEFF.IN SUNDAY 62-1230E)

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**...It will take those seven unknown thunders back there to wake her up again.**

*"Now, that's what's the reason today that the...the revivals that we're supposed to have... We have denominational revivals; we haven't had a real stirring. No, no, no, no. No, sir. Don't think we got revivals. We haven't. Oh, they've got millions and millions and millions of church members, but not a revival nowhere. No, no. The Bride hasn't had a revival yet. See? There's been no revival there, no manifestation of God to stir the Bride yet. See? We're looking for it. It will take those seven unknown thunders back there to wake her up again. He will send it. He promised it. Now, now, watch. Now, she was...she was dead." (THE THIRD SEAL. JEFF.IN WEDNESDAY 63-0320)*

**...He received a new Name...it'll be revealed in the thunders.**

*"And Jesus, His Name on earth was Redeemer, Jesus. When He was on earth, He was the Redeemer; that's true. But when He conquered death and hell, and overcome them, and ascended on high, He received a new Name. That's the reason they holler the way they do and don't get nothing; it'll be revealed in the thunders. See?" (THE FIRST SEAL. JEFF.IN MONDAY 63-0318)*

**...Wait till them seven thunders utter their voices to that group...It'll slice and cut. And they can close the heavens; they can shut this or do that, whatever they want to.**

*"God's Word, sharp, two-edged sword slays him, puts him right down. Wait till them seven thunders utter their voices to that group who really can take the Word of God and hand it there. It'll slice and cut. And they can close the heavens; they can shut this or do that, whatever they want to. Glory." (THE FOURTH SEAL. JEFF.IN THURSDAY 63-0321)*

**...the pyramid is capped by the seven thunders.**

*"It might be closer than you think it is. It's got me scared. Oh, I haven't done enough. Where are we at? Time shall be no more. He announces that time is over. What happens? What happens? Could that be so now, brethren? Seriously think. If it is, then the pyramid is capped by the seven thunders. You remember the pyramid message? It's the capstone. What did it do? The Holy Spirit capped off the individual and sealed it when we added to our faith, righteousness, and godliness, and faith, and so forth. We kept adding to it till we got seven things, and the seventh one was Love which is God. That's how He makes the individual. He caps him and seals him with the Holy Spirit. Then if that be so, He's got seven church ages that He's had seven mysteries that's been sounded away and they fought for to bring back, and now the Headstone comes to cap off the church. Does the thunders mean that, my brethren? Sirs, is that where we are at?" (SIR, IS THIS THE SIGN OF THE END? JEFF.IN SUNDAY 62-1230E)*

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**...But when all these seven thunders mysteries is to be made known, He has to come again as Son of man.**

*“Now, in the last day, It has to come back again to the Word promise. See, in the church age, there’s not very much promise, only the reformers. You never see it in the church ages there where anything but just the reformers, and so forth, which comes by revelation. But when all these seven thunders mysteries is to be made known, He has to come again as Son of man. That is the same Holy Spirit back into human flesh perfectly paralleling Sodom when God was manifested in a human being. See? And if He come then to the natural seed, Abraham, He comes now to the royal seed, Abraham, who is also waiting for the royal promised Son, not the natural, Isaac, but the royal promised Son. And that’s why there can be nothing else but prophetic, as you have well explained it, a prophet for these last days.”* (AUDIO LETTER TO LEE VAYLE. TUCSON.AZ THURSDAY 64-0500)

The Seven Thunders are to come and give rapturing faith but if they have already uttered their voices in the mid-1960s (according to the few different interpretations), why is the Bride of Christ still around all this past 40 years?

Scripturally and prophetically, the Seven Thunders have not uttered their voices because they have yet to appear. The Bride is still waiting. When those Seven Thunders come and utter their voices, their SPOKEN WORDS will fulfill all of what Bro. Branham said in the above.

### **Q: WHERE IS THE GARDEN OF EDEN?**

**A:** The Sacred Scripture declares that God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh day. Read Genesis 1:1-2:6. It also states that all of God’s creations were “good”, which means that they were “fitting”, “suitable”, or “pleasant” to Him. Yes, the earth and everything therein were created in good condition. *“For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else”* (Isa.45:18).

However, there was a place called Eden which God had formed. The whole earth was not Eden. Eden was God’s “paradise”, God’s “delight” and God’s “pleasure”. Eden means just that. And eastward in Eden God planted a Garden which was more beautiful than any other place on the earth, even Eden itself. Genesis 2:8-16 records:

*“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of*

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*good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat."*

Most Bible scholars believe that the location of the Garden of Eden was somewhere in the Middle East. Well, that is true. But where is the Garden of Eden actually located? While some may speculate that it was somewhere in present-day Iraq, near the Persian Gulf, others believe that it was the area near the headwaters of the two rivers, Tigris (Hiddekel) and Euphrates. Because of the order in which the four rivers, Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel and Euphrates are listed in the Scriptures, those Bible scholars, who believe that the Garden of Eden was somewhere in Eastern Turkey, feel that Pison had to be the first and the northern-most river since Euphrates is shown on today's map as the last of the four rivers in the south of the Mesopotamian Basin. They believe that it flowed through the present-day Armenian S.S.R. and then turned southward through Western Iran and emptied itself into the Persian Gulf.

Beloved, I beg to differ. Eden and its Garden were not located in either of those two areas. No one could actually know where Eden and its Garden were located unless the Spirit reveals them to him. A common fact often overlooked by most Bible scholars is that the existing surface of the earth is radically different from that of the period before the Flood. Today's maps do not show us the original land surface of Eden, but we could pinpoint the original location of the Garden of Eden. The land surface of the whole earth was transformed in the days of Noah when all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows and floodgates of heavens were opened. And floods of waters burst forth and poured upon the earth for forty days and nights. With such a great deluge, which caused all the high mountains to be covered by the waters, it would be a great wonder if the land surface was not transformed. With the constant pounding of the torrential rain upon the mountains, hills, valleys, plains and rivers for forty days and nights, the original formations and settings of all the geographical landscapes would inevitably be altered. [Note: The earth is made up of different types of soil. Hence, with tons of water on the earth, earthshakes and earth movements were inevitable.] Some mountain ranges had either been reshaped or altered into plateaus or hills; some headwaters would have been shifted that the rivers began to flow on new courses; lands and

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plains would have become valleys or had become 'bowls' holding large amount of waters; and mountain tops of hard rocks might have become islands. As large areas were flooded with water, terra firma would be weighed down, pushed or heaved in different directions. Such movements in the earth structures caused mountains to be brought low and valleys to be raised up (cf. Isa.40:4). The Great Rift Valley which stretches from Syria to Mozambique is a good example of such land movement. The Red Sea which is a part of this rift is still tearing itself apart inch by inch every year. [Note: One of these days the boiling pot under the San Andreas Fault in California will erupt and cause a great earthquake that a vast proportion of land will slide into the sea. There will be great tidal waves and many small islands around the Pacific will be covered with waters for many days. The land behind it will undergo a transformation. There will be even greater changes at the Second Advent of Christ in the Day of the Lord (Zech.14:4-10; Rev.16:10-21) and when the earth is made new again (Rev.21:1-2).]

By the revelation given unto me by the Lord, let me establish the location of Eden and its Garden. Geographically, Eden was a vast location. Remember that the Garden of Eden was planted in the east of Eden. It must be relatively smaller than the area of Eden itself. There was one place befitting the description "*God's Garden of Eden*" – "*paradise*", "*delight*" and "*pleasure*". It was the Land of CANAAN. Hence, the area stretching from the north of Canaan to Turkey and from the south of Canaan to the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt and westward must have been Eden. The large river that flowed eastward out of Eden to water the Garden no longer exists today as most part of Eden had become a sea after the great deluge. The Great (or Mediterranean) Sea was most probably a large area of plains and valleys with many large lakes and rivers flowing into them. Its coastlines were originally ranges of hills and mountains. There were four "heads" into which a large river from Eden flowed eastward through the Garden and split up after flowing out of the Garden. But only the Hiddekel and Euphrates rivers are identifiable although their "heads" have been displaced in the region of Eastern Turkey.

Where the four rivers originally were are not very important. Just remember that there were four of them. However, let me try and trace where the four rivers were most likely located.

The large river of Eden which flowed eastward through the Garden divided into four "heads" when it flowed out of the Garden. The River Pison was the first to break off from its 'mother' and flowed southward, most probably, zigzagging downwards along the mountain ranges of the Sinai Peninsula towards the top half of the Red Sea and crossed the Nubian Desert southward. The second "head" thrust toward southeast along the mountain ranges of the Arabian Peninsula and downward into

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the land of Ethiopia. The Nile River and the Red Sea are part of the Great Rift Valley. They might have been part of the two rivers, Pison and Gihon. Geographically, River Hiddekel and River Euphrates might have flowed along the mountain ranges of Lebanon and Syria, with River Hiddekel flowing as far north as Eastern Turkey, before they meandered downward through the Mesopotamia and emptied their waters into the Persian Gulf.

### CANAAN IS THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Throughout the history of God's dealing with His people, the Land of Canaan had always been His focal point. This is well supported by facts found throughout the Old and New Testament Scriptures. The *"goodly mountain"* was Canaan (Ex.3:8; Deut.3:25; 4:22). It was the *"pleasant land"* of milk and honey, and the *"glory of all lands"* (Psm.106:24; Ezek.20:6,15; cf. Isa.8:8; 62:4; Hos.9:3; Zech.2:12). The Scripture tells us that God had chosen only one place on this earth to put His Name, and that was Jerusalem in the Land of Canaan (2 Chr.6:6, Neh.1:9). Before Jerusalem was chosen, Israel could worship Yahweh at any place where they could build an altar to offer their sacrifices. However, since the day when God made it the chosen place of worship, Jerusalem had been the only acceptable place of worship for the True Worshipers. Offerings unto the Lord were acceptable only upon the altar in the temple ground of Jerusalem (Deut.16:2-6). THE HOUSE OF THE LORD was in the City of Jerusalem.

When the children of Israel possessed the Land of Canaan, they made certain cities as cities of refuge (cf. Num.35). Ancient cities were usually built with high walls around them to give its inhabitants security and comfort in times of troubles. A high mountain was an ideal place for building a good strong city. And usually the ruler would live in and govern from the city which was also the capital of his empire where all national and religious activities were centered. With this understanding, we should realize what kind of city Abraham was looking for when God called him out of Ur of Chaldees to the Land of Canaan. Abraham *"looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"* (Heb.11:10). Amen. *"In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge"* (Prov.14:26 cf. Deut.33:27; 2 Sam.22:3; Psm.9:9; 46:7; 48:3; 62:7; 91:2,9; 94:22).

Yes, Jerusalem was the place where God revealed His Presence and made Himself known to Israel, His chosen people, the natural seeds of Abraham. When God wanted to reconfirm His Covenant with Abraham, He commanded Abraham to take his son, Isaac, to *"the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of"* (Gen.22:2b). Since 691 A.D. the mountain peak of Moriah has been occupied by the Mosque of Omar, better known as *'The Dome of the Rock'*. This is the place where the Temples of Solomon

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and Zerubbabel once stood in their respective times. The word “*Moriah*” bears these meanings: “*high place, awe, light, Lord*”. The Jews even believe that this place is located at the center of the earth and that it was here that light first shone upon mankind. And was it not so that the Shekinah Glory of God came shining upon Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when God came to fellowship with them in the cool of the day, at evening time? (cf. Gen.3:8). The Psalmists have declared: “*For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it*” (Psm.132:13-14). (Don’t you notice the hidden mystery of the Spiritual Jerusalem?) Yes, the city, Jerusalem, on Mount Zion is God’s habitation forever. The Psalmists (in Psalm 48:1-2) describe the holy mountain as “*beautiful for situation*” ( “*fair and beautiful for elevation*” – Amplified) or “*beautiful in its loftiness*”. It was the “*perfection of beauty*” (Psm.50:2).

The Land of Canaan was the very place where the Garden of Eden was located and where Man had his beginning in an environment rich with the beauty of God’s creations. God’s relationship with Man began here. It is therefore obvious that God had chosen this place where He would deal with His chosen people and dwell with them forever.

Satan has caused much trouble in this place since the dawn of Man. Today, many religious and political conflicts are still prevalent in the land. It is certainly not what we would expect of a land that is “*beautiful*” and “*pleasant*” and which was supposed to be a delightful paradise. Yet, the Lord God had chosen that place to make His Presence known and to put His Name in the midst of it. God has allowed His adversary to somewhat ‘hinder’ His Divine Plan for a season that the Gospel might be preached to the Gentiles (Rom.11:24-25). But eventually all things will be fulfilled according to His Eternal Plan. Yes, I believe the Light of the Shekinah Glory will soon shine upon God’s chosen people again in the midst of Israel - for the last time - to establish Itself there forever.

### ***Q: Tell me, who is the Chief Apostle, today?***

**A:** On the 12 April, 2004, I received this question in an email from a Nigerian, P\_\_ U. I. C \_\_\_\_ [name withheld by editor]. When I replied that there is no such a thing as a chief apostle, I received this response dated the 18 April, 2004:

*I’m just barely a year in the message following, but I must tell you I’m glad I’d not get to come in the message through your convert 'cos I would have been more a miserable a believer than on the other side of the message.*

*I never could think this of you, having been in the message for so long, not to know that the office of the chief apostle is the ministry through which*



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*Christ is characterised in His apostolic body of ministry (i.e. the 5-fold ministry ) as the Head over the Church.*

*If in the days of the early church there is the ministry and office of the chief apostle, what bible do you have to disannul the fact of it reality in the restored ministry of which the prophet (bro. Branham ) himself speaks of, saying, Malachi 4 produce Ephesians 4; to which also he testified of a great PERSON expected of the Bride, and that two of them would not be on the scene together in the ministry, and attested to it reality as by refering to the words of John the Baptist, that he ( the expected one ) must INCREASE and himself decrease.*

*What do you see, if not Christ characterised in the ministry of the expected one?*

*I must say it would have been better you'd never have heard bro. Branham than having heard yet to have not understand him, talkless his message of restoration which brought us back to the FAITH OF THE FATHERS - the apostolic faith.*

*I don't doubt, should you call yourself an apostle, you don't know the truth that among all apostles there is the chiefest, hence I'll say, what ground do you have to call yourself an apostle when there is no chief among the apostolic ministry you claim to be of.*

*Through the multitude of deception the heart of man is hardened from the way of truth.*

*God help you.*

*P \_\_\_ U.I*

A deceiving spirit has seduced this man. Notice how that spirit manifests in the man's writings.

The evil spirit that existed in organized religions is now very rampantly manifesting in many churches within the Endtime Message movement. From the very beginning of the First Church Age, the deeds that the spirit of the Nicolaitanes started has now come upon many ministers and believers. The deeds are abominable to God; He had hated them and He still does. By the second age the deeds had become a doctrine. Today the same deeds and doctrine are found not only in the religious systems but also in the 'Message Believing Churches'.

After Bro. Branham passed away there have been many false teachings going out from the USA to the rest of the world. One of these teachings is that God has another man, another leader, to take His Bride to perfection. Many preachers have openly declared that God has ordained them as the "Elisha" or "Joshua" or any other "one-man ministry" by which all other ministers and believers must heed to their words or to conform to their teachings. There are several in USA claiming to be in that position, as if

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such a position exists. Similar teachings soon appeared in other parts of the world, Canada, Europe, Central and South America, certain nations in the African continent and even India.

That Bro. Branham was the last messenger to the Gentile Church is clear from the Scriptures. He was the last of the Seven Stars in the hand of Christ. His simple message called the elect out of all religious “isms” and pointed them back to the Apostolic Foundation of the Word. It is in the homeland of the Promised Word that the elect are now being perfected by the ministries of the Ascension Gifts (of Ephesians 4). And the Scriptures testify to it.

The writer of the above email questioned me to tell him “*who is the chief Apostle, today*”. Undoubtedly this man is one of many around the world who believe that a certain minister in Jeffersonville, Indiana, U.S.A. is God’s chief apostle for today. A few articles have been written on the man and his ministry. The circulated articles try to prove the teaching that there is a chief apostle today by force-feeding the notion that the Apostle Paul was the chief apostle in his days. Scripture verses such as Gal.2:7-8; Rom.11:13; 1 Cor.4:14-16, are used to try and show that Paul was the chief apostle.

This teaching that the Bride of Christ has a chief apostle to whom all other apostles and ministers in the 5-Fold Ministry must subject themselves is a heresy. This teaching forces all ministers of every level within the Ascension Gifts to subject their teachings to ONE MAN’s words as the absolute. This is no different from the so-called authority of the Roman Catholic Pope who claims to be “Vicarius Filii Dei” or the so-called ABSOLUTE words of William Branham as propagated by the Branhamites. Any minister who wants to make himself the “Number One” (or is made by his followers to be “Number One”) has already fallen from his estate. Remember Lucifer.

One reason this false teaching came into existence is the heretical idea that in order to have the UNITY of Faith, you have to have a leader – A CHIEF APOSTLE – with whom all other ministers must line up their understanding of the Word of God. What difference is there between this form of UNITY and that of the Ecumenical Movement? Not forgetting, of course, Branhamism as formed by the Branhamites.

Unity is not based upon the teachings of ONE MAN or that there is ONLY ONE MAN by whom and through whom all revelations would flow. That’s hogwash! That’s what the Branhamites did with the words of Bro. Branham whom they believed to be infallible as it is with the Roman Catholics to the words of their Pope. But that the Bride will have the UNITY OF THE FAITH is certain. We cannot force it. Our Lord knows how to bring that about as we keep the UNITY OF THE SPIRIT in love and subjection, one to another.

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To propagate this heretical teaching (of a Chief Apostle), several scripture verses have been taken out of context to profile an image that Paul was actually the chief apostle among all the other apostles in his days. Like Trinitarians who simply take certain scriptures to IMPLY a Trinity, so do these propagators of a CHIEF APOSTLE.

If Paul was the chief apostle why did he say:

*“For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things. Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?”* (2 Cor.11:5-7)

*“I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.”* (2 Cor.12:11)

The word “chiefest” is from the Greek word “*lian*” meaning “*much, exceeding*”. The word is used ironically by Paul of the claims of those who decried him: he was forcing a point when he said that he was “*not behind those other super apostles (extra-super apostles, most eminent apostles)*”. Hence, Paul was simply saying that as an apostle, he was equal to all the other apostles and that he was certainly not inferior.

And Jesus said, “*...for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers... Neither be called instructors, because One is your Instructor, the Christ*” (Matt.23:8,10).

To insinuate that Paul was the chief apostle because of the “*abundance of the revelations*” (cf. 2 Cor.12:7) given to him is unscriptural. Just because one has an “abundance of revelations” than all others, does that make him “the chief”? Like all other Ascension Gifts (Eph.4), not all apostles are equal. Some are given 100 folds, some 80 folds, some 50 folds, and so on. But all are apostles.

To say that Paul was “the chief” would decry Peter’s position. Paul could not go where Peter could. He could not even go where Thomas had gone. Though Paul was sent to the Gentiles, he did not cover every Gentile nation. Thomas was sent to India not just to search for the lost sheep of the house of Israel and to give them the Gospel but also to bring the true light to those Gentile pagans there. And whilst he was there, from about 52 A.D., did he not have any revelation from His Lord and Master? And if he did, did he confer (long distance?) with the Apostle Paul about his revelation? Sounds silly, doesn’t it? Each of the apostles played and fulfilled his own part. Each was able to recognize the calling of the other and had eyes to see God’s Truth in unity.

The writer of the email, and many others like him, are trying to force others into accepting every teaching of their “chief apostle”. All must see

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the Word of God “eye to eye” according to the “eye of the chief apostle”, even if the teachings are wrong. And truly, they have come to believe a lie that their “chief apostle” could never be wrong! (What difference are these believers from the Branhamites who have made Bro. Branham the Absolute?)

If any apostle (or preacher) wants to exalt himself, let him do it in the Lord. He has every right. But let him not over-exalt himself lest he finds himself sitting as God in the assembly of God’s children (cf. 2 Cor.11:16; 12:7; 2 Thes.2:4). In 2 Cor.10, Paul boasted of himself with the others but notice the words he used – “*our*”, “*us*” and “*we*”.

Therefore, anyone who teaches that Paul in his days was THE CHIEF among all the other apostles is a heretic. To falsely teach that all the other apostles had their revelations lined up with Paul’s and were subjected to Paul is nonsense. How did those who were already apostles before Paul line up their revelations? With whom did they line up their revelations anyway? And did John check up his revelations that Christ gave him on the Isle of Patmos with Paul’s revelations?

To teach that Paul had clarity of revelations given him is true but to teach that he had revelations in all aspects of the Word of God is a lie. But, to teach that Paul was entrusted with a greater amount of talents, a greater responsibility, a greater portion of the apostolic ministry, and a greater amount of truth would scripturally be correct. “*To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel.*” (Eph.3:8)

No true apostle of God would force another to come under his subjection. But “*all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble*” (1 Pet.5:5). And no true apostle of God would teach what he did not first receive from his own Master.

Every minister has a part to play in the Ministry of Christ. The standard of God’s Word is placed into the hands of certain men to be raised up in the region(s) that the Lord has placed him. For a minister to make himself the NUMBER ONE APOSTLE over the whole world is baloney.

In order to propagate or to endorse such a doctrine these cultic men would have to tear down other ministers and their teachings. In so doing, they are trying to turn believers around towards the ONE MAN they believed to be THE CHIEF APOSTLE. They would take excerpts out of other ministers’ teachings and make long dissertations to prove them “wrong” and insist those ministers should not be listened to. This is done to call attention to the doctrines taught by the CHIEF APOSTLE to be observed as the YARDSTICK. They announce that anyone whose teaching does not measure up to that YARDSTICK should quickly repent and

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line up with the CHIEF APOSTLE's. The attitude of such cultic men would only further dis-unify the Bride of Christ.

There is one who is CHIEF in every ministry and that is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He's THE INSTRUCTOR to every minister. We could call Him, APOSTLE OF APOSTLES, PROPHET OF PROPHETS, and so on. We could call Him THE CHIEF APOSTLE, THE CHIEF PROPHET, and so on. But all these did not appear in the Scripture except for this one:

*“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”* (1 Pet.5:4)

Truly, that alone sums up the whole character of THE CHRIST, as one who cares for His sheep like no others.

In conclusion, let me say this: there is one who is truly THE CHIEF. He is called THE CHIEF SHEPHERD (Grk: *archipoimen*, head shepherd) or ARCH-SHEPHERD. As Chief Shepherd, Christ is never addressed as Chief Apostle, Chief Prophet, Chief Evangelist or Chief Teacher. It is by Him and through His eye that all children of God must see God's Truth.

For one to teach and make a servant of God “the chief apostle”, he has been deceived by the Nicolaitane spirit. He is bringing back that doctrine of the Nicolaitanes into the church, a doctrine that God hates (Rev.2:15). Remember it is this very spirit of the Nicolaitanes that had put an “ARCH” over a bishop above all other bishops – an ARCHBISHOP!

Does anyone want the devil to use him to bring about an ARCH-APOSTLE? Remember he will want your allegiance as if he is the ABSOLUTE and has all the RIGHT ANSWERS to Spiritual Truths.

### **Q: WHY DID ADAM HAVE NIPPLES?**

**A:** Many times I have come under fire from some extremists in the Message of Bro. Branham. Because they could not face SCRIPTURAL TRUTH in what I teach as it contradicts their interpretations of what they THINK Bro. Branham was saying, they have to throw some punches at me to try and silence me.

The question in this article was asked because someone (and he is not the only one) could not accept the fact that the sexual reproductive organs of the man and the woman are created by God for the purpose of reproduction. They could not accept that it was God's intention for Adam and Eve to have physical wedlock, be as one in sexual union, so as to have conception. The reason this person and the many others in Branhamism could not accept this fact is because they SAY AND BELIEVE WORD FOR WORD THE ORAL WORDS OF BRANHAM. They would quote him as saying that Adam was to bring forth children by literally speaking

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to the dust of the ground and sons and daughters will literally shoot up. (I guess a certain amount of dust will sort of move together and shape a man or a woman and then out of it will come the flesh of a man or a woman.) Then Adam and Eve will have sons and daughters (fully grown, of course) standing before them calling them, "Papa. Mama".

Is this not a silly and foolish presumption? The brother (and all like him) could not produce one scripture for that so-called revelation. All they have are statements of Branham.

Because they could not understand the words of Bro. Branham, they simply take his words as he uttered them. Is that not like those foolish presumptuous Jews in Jesus' day who took His words literally as spoken, *"Destroy this temple and in three days I'll raise it up"*? It's the same presumptuous spirit that deceived these people today. They are so ignorant. Where is the spiritual wisdom? Some of them even turned around and put words to try and make me an unbeliever by saying, *"So you disagree with the prophet? You make yourself smarter and above God's prophet?"* Etc, etc. And some will go around spreading words that *"Richard Gan does not believe in the prophet. He called Bro. Branham a false prophet for teaching false doctrines."*

Religious people follow a set of rules, of words, of the "dos" and the "don'ts". But they are quick to point out to others about their "this" and their "that" when they are contradicted. They are not spiritual. They have no spiritual discernment, no spiritual revelation of God's Word. How much like the Pharisees are such people! Until they have the revelation of God, he will continue in their pharisaical pride and deception and accusation of those who hold the Truth.

Now, because the person could not answer my question as to why God created sex organs, if they were not to be used for the purpose of procreation, he shot forth this question to challenge me: *"Why did Adam (or man) have nipples? Did he give suck to a baby like a woman?"* [Another Branhamite had tried to justify Branham's statement by saying that God made sexual organs for Adam and Eve so that they could have a choice of either speaking the word to the dust of the ground to create children for themselves or making use of the sexual organs to procreate children. Hence, because the couple used the sexual organs they brought sin to the world. How foolish!]

I have given him a brief explanation. Of course, he could not see it to accept it. Why should he and others like him?

With the Lord's help, I will attempt to give a better picture as to why Adam had nipples. You may or may not agree with me. This is not a doctrinal issue to debate over. This is to provide an understanding of the mystery, the mysterious way our God had so designed MANKIND. O mystery!

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Why did Adam have nipples? In the creation of MAN, Adam, God created him BOTH MALE AND FEMALE. Male and female do not mean that Adam was both man and woman. He was created first in the IMAGE of God as a spirit. God has both male and female attributes. God is not man and woman. Hence, as a spirit Adam had both these attributes – male and female.

When Adam was later given a physical body of dust, what and how did he look like? Did he look half man and half woman? No, not at all. He looked like a man, totally. He walked like a man, not like a woman. His voice was deep like a man, certainly not high pitched like a woman. He had male reproductive organs, not female reproductive organs. He had nipples and certainly he had no breasts and nipples like that of a woman.

Then what is the significance of the nipples? God did not put the nipples there just for decoration. Every design in God's creation has a purpose and/or a reason for it. Take for an example: Adam and Eve had no navel. There was no reason for it to be there as they were not conceived in a woman's womb. They had no connection to a physical mother. We all have a navel but what purpose does a navel now serve? Nothing but just a vestigial left over from the once useful umbilical cord when we were in our mother's womb. The navel shows that we had a connection to our physical mother. Similarly, the nipples was God's design to show a connection between the MALE and the FEMALE. God put them on Adam to show a connection. See? If something is there, there is a reason for it. If something is not there, there is also a reason for it.

For the nipples of Adam, God is showing a tie or a link between the male and the female being ONE. Science has shown that Man and Woman are intrinsically linked by the "male" and the "female" in them. The male and the female hormones are tied together and proven for a fact. Some may think that the testosterone is for the man and the oestrogen for the woman. Not so. These hormones are not man's or woman's exclusively. They are intrinsically link to the male and female as ONE. They were there in Adam, before Eve was even brought forth. The hormonal factor is what draws a man and a woman together. Of course, excessive amount of oestrogen in man will cause him to develop gynaecomastia (large breasts). Notice the "breasts and nipples" issue? [Science shows that the foetus begins life as "female" in the first few weeks. After eight weeks onwards the gender will begin to be determined.]

Now, it also proves the fact that it does not really take TWO to propagate. It takes only ONE. The mind will think of a man and a woman. In actual fact it is about a male and a female. It is not about the man's sexual organ and the woman's sexual organ, rather it is about the attributes of male and female as ONE that God separated and then brought back together in the creation of MAN (cf. Gen.2:23-24).

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God is Spirit with the attributes of male and female. The male holds the seed of life. The female holds the milk of life. Until the seed is passed to the female the milk will not flow because there is no life. [Hence we see a type here: Christ, the Seed Word of God (masculine) has to come to the Church, the Bride (feminine), or she will not have life, and without the life she will have no milk (of life) flowing in her.] The nipples on Adam shows life is in the Man for he is the male, who holds the seed, not the Woman for she is the female, who holds the milk (as evidenced in her breasts). God drew out the female in Adam and made him a woman, a being with enlarged breasts that hold the milk of life.

Adam was a type of Jesus Christ and Eve was a type of the True Church, the male and the female or the masculine and the feminine. You cannot separate one from the other. And the nipples on Adam (man) testify of that mystery – a link between the male and female, and that the SEED OF LIFE was to be passed to the nurturing vessel. It shows that the “male” was not the nurturer, but life giver, and the “female” the nurturer.

Now, the Holy City New Jerusalem is the wife of Christ (Rev.21). Here is what Isaiah said of the city Jerusalem:

*“Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.” (Isa.66:10-11)*

The Woman reflects the Man, as the Church reflects Christ. God chose to have the woman carry the MILK OF LIFE but she has to be ONE with the Man in order to manifest that LIFE. The Church (Bride) carries the MILK OF THE LIFE OF GOD because SHE came from CHRIST. Hence, we see a ministry in the Church that feeds the LIFE that is in Christ and from Christ.

Furthermore, the attributes of male and female in God correspond with Fatherhood and Motherhood. When God stepped forth to create and bring life, He was both. He could not bring forth life without nurturing it. Fatherhood provides life. Motherhood provides nurturing. As God is Spirit, it would be foolish for anyone to ask if He has nipples. Again remember that we are not talking about man and woman but male and female.

But did Jesus have nipples? Certainly, like all men have. Jesus was that spirit of Son-ship that was manifested in the Logos. As Bro. Branham said, we bypassed the “theophany” but Jesus came through the “theophany”. Hence, in Christ Jesus was seen the mystery of a “one” that was to be separated from His side to form a Bride for Him. That the male and the female must be ONE to be a complete unit, is in the mystery of God’s plan of creation and redemption.



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Adam looked like any man today with nipples. God did not intend Adam to have two enlarged breasts full of milk as He had already counseled with Himself and pre-planned to show a hidden mystery (concerning Christ and His Church). Adam had no breasts like a woman nor enlarged nipples. He is the male, the seed carrier. But the feminine attribute of God's image still lay inside Adam. Taking out the "female" spirit in Adam, God formed the woman with "milk" breasts and bigger nipples. Adam had to have the nipples to show that he holds the seed of life and his OTHER PART holds the MILK OF LIFE. And that the MALE and the FEMALE are not TWO but ONE.

Unlike the creation of animals, MANKIND was created in God's IMAGE. Hence, there could only be ONE direct and original creation, not TWO (a pair) as in animal creation. First, the image, then came the likeness (cf. Gen.1:26-27). It testifies of the invisible side of God (God is Spirit) and the visible side of God (the Logos). The image is the spiritual side of God. Adam was first created a spirit (invisible). The likeness is the visible side of God. Adam was then given a physical body (visible) like unto that of the Logos. [Read: **The Image and Likeness of God.**]

Remember, we are dealing with MANKIND created in the image of God. We are not dealing with ANIMAL-KINDS. There are oddities in the animal kingdom to buffet the mind of those who are intellectual. Animals were not created in the image of God. They were created in pairs and were direct creation from the dust. Yet, most male species have nipples. Some, like the male horse, "appear" not to have any. Each male is a life giver too.

If MANKIND was created as a PAIR, Adam may or may not have nipples. But where would we see the picture of the relationship between Christ and His Church that we know was portrayed in Adam from whose side Eve came forth? Where is that ONENESS? Would Eve have fallen in transgression of the Word of God if she was a direct and original creation? If not, then redemption story could not be told for certainly there will not be one at all. And all the happenings in history would not and could not have taken place. And so on and so forth.

God has so beautifully designed and created MANKIND that only His children can see His handiwork as to Who He really is and our link to Him as our Heavenly Father and Saviour.

### ***Q: Can Christians Eat Food Offered To Idols,...and Blood?***

**A:** This question is invariably met with either one of the following two answers:

- 1) No. Such things should never be consumed by Christians.
- 2) Yes, but only food offered to idols. Christians cannot eat blood.

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But what saith the Scriptures? Is it true that the Word of the Lord forbids the eating of food offered to idols and the eating of blood?

The following Scriptures, from both the New and Old Testaments, are often used in support of such beliefs:

Act 15:19-20 – *Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.* (cf. 15:29; 21:25)

Gen 9:4 – *But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.*

Lev 7:26-27 – *Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings. Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.* (cf. 17:10-14)

To put this issue in perspective, let us examine the sequence of the underlying events as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

When the Apostles and the Jewish converts in Judea heard that a group of Gentiles had also received the Holy Spirit through the ministration of the Word by Peter, they expressed their disbelief. They contended with Peter who convinced them by narrating the events which led to the Gentiles' conversion. The Jews then accepted that God had also given the Gospel of salvation to the Gentiles.

Now, it was not very long after that that the number of Jewish converts to the Gospel began to dwindle and many Jews started to oppose and blaspheme against the preaching of Paul. With the very same Gospel that the Jews had rejected, God sent Paul and Barnabas to preach to the Gentiles. Many Gentiles were soon converted. But there were some Judean Jewish believers who later went to the city of Antioch and taught the Christian Gentiles that "*unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved*" (Act 15:1). This caused Paul and Barnabas to have a heated dispute and debate with them but those believers would not accept the words of Paul and Barnabas as final. So, together with some other believers, Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem to get the final answers from the Apostles and Elders there.

Notice that, at that juncture, Paul was just a Prophet and Teacher in the ministry of the Lord Jesus (cf. Act 13:1). That's why whatever truths he said on the subject was literally by-passed. The Christians would only accept the answer from the Apostles in Jerusalem. Paul was humble enough to accommodate to their wishes. So he went on to see the Apostles.

In Jerusalem, some converts from the Pharisaical sect also believed that the Gentile Christians needed to be circumcised. When Paul, Barnabas

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and those men with them arrived at Jerusalem, they met with the Apostles and the Elders and gave them the report.

Act 15:6 – *So the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.*

The matter was much disputed at the council meeting. Opinions were offered until finally James, the brother of our Lord Jesus, stood up to give his proposal of what he thought was the best answer:

Act 15:19-20 – *Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.*

Looking at this, let us remember that, the 11 Apostles were once disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ during His 3½-year ministry. They walked with Him. They ate with Him. They learned from Him. Besides these 11 disciples, there were many others. Some of these disciples were later called into the Apostolic ministry. The James who gave his final judgment on the issue was the brother of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was not one of the original twelve disciples. He, not Peter, was believed by many to be the head of the Church in Jerusalem. Anyway, all these men were either disciples of Christ when He was alive or after His death. And all were called into the Ministry of our Lord. However, they were also religious. Here, in this passage of Acts, is recorded the mind of the disciples who were anointed with the Holy Spirit, on or after the Day of Pentecost, and ordained as Apostles or elected to the office of an Elder. The record shows that they were still just as religious, holding on to the laws of Moses, in one way or another. One would expect Peter, the big fisherman, at least to know what the Lord had taught concerning the work of Grace and speak up truthfully under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. He didn't; neither did any of the others who had walked with Christ, nor even James and John, the sons of Thunders.

The final proposal, delivered by James, showed the religiousness of their mind. They were still holding on to the law of Moses to a certain extent. Though they finally decided not to force the law of circumcision upon the Gentile converts, giving the reason that it was a Jewish rite, would they still have it imposed on a believing Jew who, per chance, happened to be uncircumcised?

With the law of circumcision aside, James said: *“But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood”*. If the law of circumcision was not applicable, why impose some other laws? Some Christians feel that the Gentile believers must be taught those things because they did not know nor worship the True God of Israel. They were idol worshippers, fornicators,

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tors and blood eaters. Given that the Gentiles were such characters, but to whom were the laws of God, through Moses, first given? Was it not to the Jews and not the Gentiles? Therefore, were not such laws, given repeatedly to the Jews throughout the different generations, applicable to them because that among them were idol worshippers, fornicators and blood eaters? But why these three particular laws? Why not others?

No doubt the Spirit of the Lord have this record written down for a good example of how a person could be converted from a certain religious faith and its system into the Gospel of Grace, yet his religious mind would still hold on to some of the former beliefs. Is it not true that we could convert a man out of the world but that it is hard to rid the world out of the man? Likewise, the same is true with the Apostles and the Elders. They were once believers of the Law of Moses and the prophets, but were converted to the Gospel of Grace, and yet they still held on to (some of) the Law.

Yes, I believe that the Lord is guiding them just as He promised He would – *“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you”* (Jhn.14:26).

Throughout the Bible, we are shown that God always revealed Himself to individuals. He worked with individuals. The Apostles knew that. They themselves were individually dealt with by their Master when He was with them. But the Apostles, as human as they were, sometimes let their feelings and passions get the better of themselves. And this was a case in point. Instead of individually seeking the Lord, they met with the Elders and together convened a council meeting. Perhaps they did that because of the pressure from the believers who sought for the consensus of all the Apostles and the Elders at “their headquarters in Jerusalem”. And this is what we see today in Christendom, wherever and whatever the “headquarters” are. Christians would look for a consensus and treat that consensus as an absolute. And, of course, the larger the group (of theologians, preachers, believers), the consensus would appear to be absolutely and theologically correct.

God never works with a group. He never will. On the revelation of the Word, no council of Christians ever convened have obtained the Perfect Will and true blessing of the Lord. All they have was a collective agreement among themselves, with only the Permissive Will of the Lord – *“For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things”* (Act 15:28).

If all the Apostles at Jerusalem had individually sought the Lord diligently regarding the issue facing them, they would all have an answer from the Lord, by His Spirit. God might reveal to one or two persons.

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Then there might come a confirmation by a prophecy or a word of knowledge. The Apostles should not have rushed into the issue seeing that it concerned the Mind of the Lord, the revelation of His Truth. Instead they set down quickly together with the Elders and held a council. Surely in a multitude of “counselors” there would be dispute and debate over an issue. The council had much dispute over the issue in question before they came to an agreement. It was an agreement based on religious feeling concerning the law, which was spiritual. However, it was not based on a spiritual revelation because the opinions of the flesh were involved. The carnal mind is always at enmity with God.

Well, a letter was written and addressed to the Gentile believers through Paul, Barnabas, Barsabas and Silas, that *“That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well”* (Act 15:29).

Remember that Paul, Barnabas, Barsabas and Silas were prophets and teachers in the Ministry of Christ at that point in time. They were not Apostles nor Elders of the Jerusalem Church. Hence, they were obviously not a part of the council of Apostles and Elders who sent them to the Gentile believers with a letter of the council’s decision on the matter of circumcision.

I believe that though Paul was in agreement with the answer given on the matter of circumcision, he was certainly not in favour of the enforcement of the laws upon the Gentile believers. But Paul held his peace. He respected the decision of the Apostles and the Elders of Jerusalem. He was an anointed man with the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God. He believed that God would reveal His Truth progressively to take His saints *“from glory to glory”* into perfection (cf. 2 Cor.3:18; Heb.6:1-3; Eph.4:11-16).

Concerning the Christian life, Paul had a clear revelation that it was contrary to Grace to subject a believer to the Law. This is clear from the message of his epistles. He also knew that they were those who were either confused or had extreme opinion concerning the keeping of the Law. But he approached it with grace and understanding against those without such knowledge of the truth as he had.

The Jewish nation, as a whole, had become set in their religious traditional faith that they could not see the Messianic Gospel. The Lord then sent Paul to the Gentiles with the Gospel. Paul was specially used by the Lord. As Paul’s ministry grew, he identified himself as an Apostle by the will of God – *“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus”* (2 Tim.1:1).

## PROPHETIC\*REVELATION

Much later the other Apostles finally recognized Paul as one of them, but one with a far deeper revelation of the Word (2 Pet.3:15-17).

Now, let us look at Paul's revelation on the subject in question.

1 Cor 8:1 – *Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.*

2 – *And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.*

3 – *But if any man love God, the same is known of him.*

4 – *As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.*

5 – *For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)*

6 – *But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

7 – *Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.*

8 – *But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.*

9 – *But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak.*

10 – *For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;*

11 – *And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?*

12 – *But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.*

13 – *Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.*

Idol is nothing, but many converts who are new in the Faith may not think so. Being accustomed all their life to the idea that an idol is a god (something real), such converts think that, if they eat the food offered to an idol it means eating it as a thing offered to something that is real. And because their conscience is weak, they feel defiled.

Food does not bring us closer to God, whether or not we eat them. It does not make us any better nor does it make us any worse. It is how

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS - 2

we exercise our freedom in the things we do that we do not become a stumbling block to the weak.

Paul further warns that if a weak brother sees a believer, who has the knowledge, sits and eats in an idol's temple, he will be upset and confused in his mind and his conscience weakened, perhaps his faith may even be destroyed. In such case the offending believer is deemed to have sinned against the Lord.

In exercising our liberty we must remember never to offend a weaker brother. Our liberty must not be taken for granted such that we make ourselves stumbling blocks to others. Paul even said that if eating meat offends a brother, he would be careful never to eat meat again to offend him.

In the same epistle, Paul also brought up the issue of an idol and food offered to it. He warned the believers not to commit the same mistake as Israel did. Under the mighty hand of God Israel went out of Egypt. They tasted the many blessings of God throughout their journey. But they tempted the Lord several times and were dealt with accordingly. At Horeb, their craving for food caused them to commit spiritual fornication with a golden calf and to eat food offered to it (Ex.32). Paul asked:

1 Cor 10:19 – *What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?*

20 – *But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.*

21 – *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.*

22 – *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?*

Obviously the answer to both parts of Paul's question (v.19) is – nothing. However, Paul pointed out a fact that the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, adding *"I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils"*. Now, this remark, together with the statement of verse 21, has been taken by some Christians to mean that Paul was saying that a Christian is forbidden to eat food offered to idols. On the contrary, Paul was saying that he did not want believers to have fellowship with demons. (The cup signifies what is offered and the table signifies a place of fellowship.) Israel did just that. They had drank of the spiritual blessings of God and ate from the table spread out for them in the wilderness. But at Horeb they made and worshipped a gold-molded calf. They worshipped it and offered sacrifice to it, and then sat down and ate the sacrifice. Israel had committed spiritual fornication by worshipping the idol (as the god who brought them out of Egypt); thus, fellowshiping with demons. Read Exodus 32.

## PROPHETIC\*REVELATION

With that Paul once again brought up the care of another person's well-being. A believer should realize that not all things are helpful and beneficial even if they are lawful.

1 Cor 10:23 – *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.*

24 – *Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.*

Now, Paul gave the very best advice possible concerning food:

1 Cor 10:25 – *Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:*

Eat whatever food you want that is sold in the market without asking any question for conscience' sake. If this is the true advice of an Apostle of the Lord, then the eating of anything – any food which the dietary law of Moses forbids in Leviticus 11, including blood, is not contrary to the Christian faith. If conscience troubles you about eating certain food, then avoid eating them. Otherwise, as Paul said: *"Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin"* (Rom.14:22b-23).

1 Cor 10:26 – *For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.*

Some Christians may yet argue and exclaim, *"But the blood is life! Life is in the blood!"*

True, but what has that to do with the faith and the walk of a Christian?

*"Oh, because Jesus shed His blood for our sins!"*

True, but what has that to do with the eating of animal blood?

*"Because if we eat the blood of animal, we are not respecting the Blood of Christ."*

Untrue. This is one strange presumptuous teaching I have ever come across. There is no such teaching in the Scriptures. The whole argument against the eating of blood in the New Testament is the "law" which was first put forth to the Gentile believers by the Jerusalem council.

Why was the blood of animal an issue in the Old Testament? Recall the Fall in the Garden of Eden. The blood of an animal was involved in the Fall. That animal was the Serpent. The Devil, through the Serpent, had not only brought chaos upon mankind but also upon the animal kingdom. Hence, the sacrificing of innocent animals by the hand of the Lord to clothe Adam and his wife. An animal was sacrificed, blood was shed and a life was taken just so that its skin could clothe the Man. Another animal also faced the same fate to clothe the Woman.



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However, it was not the skin covering that was an atonement for sin, rather it was the shedding of blood (Heb.9:22). The skin was only a covering for the nakedness which man became aware of when he fell short of the glory of God. But the skin speaks of the life of an innocent animal given up that man might “live” in the eyes of God. Not only was animals sacrificed to appease the wrath of God, but they were also eaten. Therefore, it proves to be true that through an animal (the Serpent) death had struck the body of man by the intermingling of blood (in fornication). The body of man began to die (Gen.2:17; 3:4). Hence, animals have to die to “compensate” the dying body of man that he might “live” – literally as food for his body. It was in both these lines of thoughts – the blood and the life – that God forbade the eating of blood under the Law which He gave to Israel, His covenant people. By the Law, Israel was constantly reminded of the blood issue in the Fall of Mankind and the requirement of the shedding of blood of an innocent life for the propitiation of sin (Lev.17:14; Deut.12:23; 1 Jhn.2:2; 4:10). Hence, the life is in the blood – our soul hangs upon the Life of God which was in the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, examine this next verse:

1 Cor 10:27 – *If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.*

The word “feast” is “festival” and not a meal at a lunch or dinner table as a number of Bible translators have erroneously translated it. Here Paul is saying that if an unbeliever compels you to his pagan festival feast, and you desire to go, just eat whatever is laid on the table before you, without asking question for the sake of conscience. And since it is a pagan feast, the food on the table is likely to include blood cooked in some form. So, if you eat without asking question, you just might be eating blood.

1 Cor 10:28 – *But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:*

29 – *Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?*

30 – *For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?*

31 – *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

32 – *Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:*

33 – *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*

## PROPHETIC\*REVELATION

From the concluding text of Paul, we can see that it's not what we eat, as is also evident by Paul's epistle to the Romans (chapter 14). But it's how we use our liberty without becoming stumbling blocks to those around us, believer or unbeliever, who are without the true knowledge of the Word and are uninformed concerning the Truth.

Rom 14:1 – *Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.*

2 – *For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.*

3 – *Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.*

4 – *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.*

5 – *One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*

6 – *He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.*

7 – *For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.*

8 – *For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*

9 – *For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

20 – *For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.*

21 – *It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.*

22 – *Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.*

23 – *And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

In conclusion, as Bible believers living under the Grace of the Lord, we know that we are not under bondage to the Law but to the Spirit of the Living God. Therefore, *“if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”* (Gal.5:25) to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.



*Books by Richard L. S. Gau.*

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*...the Dove leads.*



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