

The Smyrnaean Church Age

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William Marrion Branham

"... in the days of the voice ..." Rev. 10:7

Introduction

The remarkable ministry of William Branham was the response of the Holy Spirit to the prophecies of the Scriptures in Malachi 4:5,6, Luke 17:30, and Revelations 10:7, and many other Bible prophecies. This worldwide ministry has been a continuation of the working of God by His Spirit at this End time. It is in the Scriptures that it is spoken that it would be necessary for a ministry to arise to prepare a people for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

We pray that the printed Word will become written in your heart as you prayerfully read this message.

While every effort has been made to provide an accurate unabridged transcription and/or translation, the English audio files are the best representation of the sermons spoken by William Branham.

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1 Most glorious Father, we are so glad tonight to know that we have in our beings immortal life. The life of our God separated by tongues of fire, and sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. O Father, how we thank Thee that Thou did divide Thyself amongst the church.

No wonder our Lord said, "That day you'll know that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, I in you and you in me," how the God of heaven dwells among His people. "A little while and the world won't see me no more; yet you shall see me, for I will be with you, even in you to the end of the world." Down through every church age You'd be here, the same yesterday, today, and forever, and we would know You by the works that You perform. "These signs shall follow them that believe."

2 Lord, seeing that ... seeing the climax of all ages, time is fixing to run out, and eternity sets in. Father God, we are so glad to know that we're living in that remnant today, watching our lives and seeing the kind of objectives we have, the motives we have; and seeing that the Holy Spirit has took over.

God, may every person in divine presence tonight realize these church ages that we're living in, and flee quick to the Lord Jesus; for it is so plainly written that "The name of the Lord is a mighty tower. The righteous run into it and are safe."

O God, come tonight and anoint our being, Lord. Bring the wanderers, O Lord, that's so confused. Look at the poor sheep, Lord. They don't know what to believe. There are shepherd calls from everywhere.

We pray, Father, that they'll hear that great shepherd of the flock, the Lord Jesus, His great Spirit speak tonight, and say, "Child of mine, come unto me and I'll give you the sabbath," the rest that seals you to your eternal destination; not be tossed about upon the earth as we see the time running out now. Grant it, Father. Speak through the speaker, and listen through the ears of those who hear, for we all are listening. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. You may be seated.

3 Now, tonight we are studying at the second church age. I see many of them taking notes, and things, and that's the reason I want to make this plain each time. Now, the second church age was called the church age of Smyrna. And it taken place ... the Smyrna age was issued in at the same time the Ephesian age went out. The Ephesian age was from A.D. 55 to A.D. 170. The Smyrna age come in at 170 and goes to 312.

This church is the persecuted church, the one that wears the martyr's crown, the church of tribulation. And God's promise to it, to the elected church in it, was to give it a crown of life.

4 Each church had a star that was held in God's hand, which represented the messenger to that church age. The best that I could think was the messenger at the Ephesian church age—because the Bible does not say who they are—was Paul, because he established the Ephesian church, and was the minister of that church age that brought the light to the church, which.... St. John taken it up from there, and then Polycarp, and on down. Polycarp, rather, on down.

5 Now, the Smyrna age, I believe with all that I have been able to find, was Irenaeus. And now, I want to give you the reason why that I chose Irenaeus instead of Polycarp. Now, most all clergymen wants to think, and Bible teachers, that that angel was Polycarp.

Polycarp was a disciple of St. John. That is true. And Polycarp sealed that he was a martyr. They stabbed him under the heart, and killed him. Now, but.... He was a great man, a notable man, a godly man, sweet—no doubt one of the greatest Christians we've ever had. And there was nothing you could say against his life.

The reason that I chose Irenaeus, because I believe that Irenaeus was more closer to the Scripture than Polycarp was, because Polycarp leaned kind of towards the Roman idea of setting up an organization. And Irenaeus was firmly against it. He absolutely denounced it.

And then, as we all know, the great issue was coming at the Nicene Council. One of the great issues was whether God was three, or God was one. And Irenaeus took the side that God was God—now, just one.

6 I might read from "The Ante-Nicene Fathers," volume one, page 412, just a little quotation, if you want to put that down. Volume one of "The Ante-Nicene Fathers," and on page twelve. And it's.... If you want the volume, it's the last part of volume three. You might read the whole thing. There's several chapters of it, or several sentences.

Now I begin to read right at the last, about the last twenty, thirty verses of it. I won't read it all, but just part of it: "All the other expressions likewise bring out the title of one and the same being." See, he's trying to say what they called Him (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), and he said that's titles, not names—titles of the one being. That's exactly what we teach yet today. "As for the example [and then in parenthesis in English], (the Lord of power, The Lord Father of all, God Almighty, Most High, Creator, The Maker)," and such like. "These are not the names and titles of succession of different beings, but of one and the same [Amen!], by the name of

She said, "I'll feel for the prints of the nails." Then she turned around, she started walking back. She said:

I shall know Him, I shall know Him,
As redeemed by His side I shall stand;
I shall know Him, I shall know Him
By the prints of the nails in His hands.

100 O my Jesus, with those five precious wounds, bleeding for me yonder, how could I ever deny that precious One? Let me die, let me go the.... Let me go the way of anything, but never let me deny that precious bleeding One yonder that died for me. Yes.

And as you leave tonight, you want to "Take the Name Of Jesus With You." All right, sister. Shall we stand now, audience.

Take the name of Jesus with you,
Child of sorrow and of woe;
It will joy and comfort give you,
Take it everywhere you go.
Precious name (precious name),
O how sweet! (O how sweet!)
Hope of earth and joy of heaven;
Precious name (precious name),
O how sweet!
Hope of earth and joy of heaven.
Now as we bow our heads and softly sing:
At the name of Jesus bowing,
Falling prostrate at His feet,
King of kings in heaven we'll crown Him,
When our journey is complete.
Precious name, O how sweet!
Hope of earth and joy of heaven;
Precious name, O how sweet!
Hope of earth and joy of heaven.

Oh, don't forget the family prayer.
 You like that? Let's try it again:
 Don't forget the family prayer,
 Jesus wants to meet you there
 (you got a date, now);
 He will take your every care,
 Oh, don't forget your family prayer.

98 [A sister says, "Brother Branham, could I say something?"] Sure can, Sister. [Blank spot on tape.] Sister Nash, that's very fine. Oh, if you'll just:

If we trust and never doubt,
 He will surely bring you out;
 Just take your burdens to the Lord,
 and leave them there.
 Leave them there, leave them there.
 Take your burdens to the Lord,
 and leave them there;
 If we trust and never doubt,
 He will surely bring you out;
 Take your burden to the Lord,
 and leave them there.

99 Don't you like them old hymns? Oh, I just ... I believe them men picked up the pen, and was inspired by the Holy Ghost to write that. Like blind Fanny Crosby. When them worldly people of that day tried to make her write worldly songs, said, "Why, you'll be a rich woman," she said, "I have dedicated my life to Christ with all my talent." She was blind, you know. Said, "I owe my life and all to Christ." She said....

And then, they kind of got peeved at her because she turned down such an opportunity. She didn't sell her birthrights like Mr. Presley and them did, but she maintained her integrity. So she....

They said, "Then when you get to heaven, if there is such a place," said, "if you're like you are here, you'll be blind." Said, "What if you are blind," said, "how would you know Him?"

She said, "I'll know Him. I'll know Him."

Said, "What if you're blind? What if you are blind?"

which the one God, Father, is He who all these things ... grant to all of existence, the boon of all existence."

7 Irenaeus said that all these titles are summed up into one name, under one God, and they are only titles of what He was. He was the rose of Sharon. That's what He was. That's a title. He was the morning star. He was Alpha. He was Omega. That's titles of what He was. He was Father. He was Son. He was Holy Ghost. But there's one God. One God, and His name is one. And that's one reason that I thought Irenaeus was correct in his diagnosis here, or interpretation of the Scripture.

8 Another thing that I'd like to read you. It's found in the book, "How Did It Happen?" And this was by the historians, and, "How Did It Happen?" by R. C. Hazelton, "The History of The Early Churches." And here on page 180, "The Spiritual Gifts In Irenaeus's Time," A.D. 177 to 202. Now, the reason I'm quoting this, it's going on tape, you see, and it'll be taken off on books.

"It was in Irenaeus's time that the most of the apostolic church of France had all the gifts of the Holy Ghost." That was from him teaching, see. "Irenaeus's church members at Lyon [that's Lyon, France] spoke with tongues. It was not uncommon to see someone dead brought back to life. Healing was an everyday occurrence in all the evangelical churches everywhere." That Irenaeus knowed how to teach!

"Miracles were frequent. In fact, those churches were never without a miraculous manifestation of God's presence either by vision, suspension of the elements of nature in a miracle, to remind the evangelical Christians of that day they was his beloved disciples. But from the histories of the past, we cannot glean a single instance of raising the dead in the first Roman church."

That's people that don't ... not interested in either side. They're just telling the truth. It's historians.

9 That's why I think Irenaeus, because, you see, he had the same faith that Paul and the disciples had handed down. That's why I believe that he was the angel of the church of Smyrna, because he was ... he had the same scriptural teachings; and the same scriptural teachings upon the basis of God's Word will produce the same thing every time. If you will just simply take God's formula, and carry it out to the letter—no matter what the churches say—just follow it just the way it says, it'll produce the same thing. And that's what Irenaeus did.

10 Now, I think that Polycarp was a fine man, understand. But I say that he leaned too much to organize the church, and ... like the Nicolaitanes was doing. They were organizing the church and bringing a brotherhood

together—which seems all right, intellectually. But, you see, the Spirit is so far ahead of the intellectual, till you can't even think right, to the Spirit. "My thoughts are higher than your thoughts," saith God. "My ways are higher than your ways." So there's only one way to do. That's just follow Him by the blueprint. That's right.

11 Now, we might think, if you was going from here.... If I was going to Chicago tonight, I might get out here, and get me a compass and say, "Now let's see, Chicago sits right this-a-way. All right, I'll take right off." I wouldn't get out of Jeffersonville, see. I got to get me a road map. And there's a way lined out that I can go to Chicago in six or seven hours of travel by automobile. But I can't just cut any way. The airplane just can't cut any way. He's got a air line, or a certain height and things, that he has to fly, of certain degrees that he has to stay in. There's a way made.

And God has a way. God has a way for His church, for His people. And He never did intend it to be controlled by popes, cardinals, archbishop, or general overseers. The Holy Spirit is the tutor of the church of the living God, to raise it. And all the holiness don't go to a cardinal, or a priest, to make him a holy man in the church, anything. The laity has just as much right to the Holy Spirit as any preacher, pastor, deacon, trustee, whatevermore. Laity.

12 And the reason they call it Nicolaitanes, as we had last night, Nicolaitanes.... We broke the word down, and took it from the Greek and N-i-c-k-o, Nicko, which means "to conquer, or to overthrow." What? N-i-c-k-o, Nicolaitane, laity—to conquer the laity, and overthrow it, by giving them an order of men, clergymen that would teach them, and they would get their own conclusions together. That's how the Nicene Council was held, because many got together, and fixed up an order in the Nicene Council. We don't want to talk too much on it, 'cause that's Thursday night's, in the Nicene Council.

But there's where the Roman Catholic church was formed, out of a group of people that were converts of St. Paul, and Irenaeus, and St. Martin, and on down. They were converted Christians—from paganism over to Christianity—but wanted to pull the church back into an Old Testament form of ministry, like having high priests, and apostolic successions; like one pope to another pope, another pope.

If we could go on down through this Bible, you'd find out that that's just exactly the truth, and how God condemned the thing from the very beginning. And last night's church age said, "I hate it," and so did the church.

13 God never intended the church to be run by man. God runs His church, and He runs it through gifts of the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit is

subject to the prophet." Everything listens and quietly.... Now that's the way the church should be in order.

Now, to you people that maybe here from out, that's heard me speak it, that's the way it should be. See, the message goes forth. See the results? It happens right then. Something takes place, just exactly like discernment, or any other spirit. Isn't He wonderful? Oh, I'm so glad to know that that same thing that was ordained by St. Paul right here, hasn't died down to right here—still the same thing. Oh, I'm so glad I can say I'm one of them. Aren't you? All right.

96 Now, tomorrow night at seven o'clock we're taking the age of Laodicea and that's the marriage age. I want you to come if you possibly can.

I was just a little late tonight because, maybe the Holy Spirit speaking, and so forth, but it's early yet. It's only about twenty minutes after nine, and usually I'm here ten or eleven o'clock so that's really early down here. So, do you enjoy the messages of the Lord? And you really ... it's feeding your soul?

God bless you, my children. You know, I love you with all my heart. And sometimes, when the Spirit gets a hold of me, it cuts both.... That's the way the Word is. It's sharp, like a two-edged sword. It cuts coming, going, inward, outward, every way. But that's what circumcises us. Circumcision just cuts off the surplus flesh, the things that we oughtn't to have.

And I want you to notice. Did you hear the Spirit on the interpretation tonight? "Stop that foolishness." That circumcises. Be sincere. We all get off the line. But God knows how to shave the bumps off of us. He certainly does. I'm thankful for it. Aren't you?

97 Are you the little pianist here? I don't see.... Is Teddy? I don't see him here anywhere. All right, sister, if you will. Is that your daughter, Brother Daulton? Daughter-in-law. Mighty fine little lady. So glad that you're a Christian. All right.

What's our good old dismissing song? Let's try one, just before we go now. Just a minute, sister, before we sing, "Take the Name of Jesus with You." How many know "Don't Forget the Family Prayer?" How many prays in your family, your family prays? Oh, that's good. Let's try it once, just like old times now.

Don't forget the family prayer,
Jesus wants to meet you there;
He will take your every care,

And purchased my salvation
On Calvary's tree.

93 Our heavenly Father, as You see these three standing to their feet, O God, I pray Thee to be merciful, O eternal one, and to give to them pardon of every sin, and salvation and the Holy Spirit in their life, that they'll not be touched by the second death. They realize, Lord, tonight as they stand there, that there's something near at hand. The Holy Spirit has given warning. To see the Spirit of God fall among people, see it work just according to the Scriptures, just the three messages and close off; O God, a message to each person.

Now, Father, we pray Thee to be merciful. Let that precious Spirit stay in our midst. May we reverence it, God. Grant it. Take these souls into Thy custody, Father. They're the fruits of the message tonight, the message from the Holy Spirit that was spoken among us.

And we ask, Father God, that You'll be with them all the days of their life. And may ... in the world-without-end, may we meet them in there, saved by the blood and grace of Christ. We give them to Thee now, Father. Fill them with Thy Holy Spirit, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

94 God bless you, my brethren. Ever who is near those people that were standing, Christians, shake their hands when they sit down. Give them ... wish them God speed.

See how obedient the Holy Spirit is, how it does it right at the end? The Bible said, "Let them that speak with tongues be by two or, at the most, by three. You see—the message not while I was speaking; after it was all over. Now that's the way it's supposed to be. Everybody real reverent, listen to what the Spirit says. Then what happened? Sinners raised up to repent. Oh, think! The Holy Spirit itself ... not getting it, even though the Word has come, and made manifestation.

I know some of these people that's speaking in tongues. I know all three of them that spoke, and I know the ones that gave interpretations. I know their life is sinless before God. Brother Neville here, our pastor, a Methodist minister; a Methodist minister sitting here, received the Holy Ghost. Junie, over here, Brother Jackson, another Methodist preacher, received the Holy Ghost (that's right), with a gift of tongues and interpretations.

95 And you notice how we had the church, everyone, reverent. God's speaking. You see how He speaks just exactly according to the Bible? One, if the message don't get over just right He speaks it again. But He won't speak over three times, see, according to the Scriptures there, see. He'll give that message. He never entangles it, for "the spirit of the prophets is

in the church to correct the spirit. He's got five ministerial offices in His church. First of them is apostles, or missionaries. Missionary is the highest calling there is. Apostle. The word "missionary" means "one sent"; apostle means "one sent." Why they ever chose to be called a missionary, I don't know. But they are apostles. All right.

Apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, pastors. Now, that's the elected offices of God to His church. Then in each local church there's nine spiritual gifts that come among the people. That is: knowledge, wisdom, gifts of healing, working of miracles, speaking with tongues, interpretation of tongues. And all these things go in each local body. And every person in the church has an individual ministry. And that individual ministry goes together with the rest of the ministry, to edify the body of Jesus Christ. And never....

14 Now remember this, that here is ... I'll draw these lines tonight. The first church, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. Now, remember, as this goes on.... This church had the fullness of the Spirit, but at the end of the church age we find that it was being pressed out. The next church age pressed a little more, little more, till this one there was just a little teeny speck. "You have a few things," He said. Oh, when we get to that Thyatira church age!

15 Now after that come.... God raised up a German by the name of Martin Luther that swung the church back again. It started out a little more. He preached justification. Along come Martin Luther, preached justification. Along come John Wesley, and preached sanctification. Then, in this church age here, they come right straight back again to the baptism of the Holy Ghost again, with the same signs and wonders, coming right down.

Here's where it went out through fifteen hundred years of Dark Ages. And there's where the darkest ... or the longest church period we have in the church ages.

Then here's where it starts coming up—justification, sanctification, baptism of the Holy Ghost. And the Bible says that in the end of this age that this little minority here will be squeezed out, because the same church of Pentecost will start doing the same thing they started back here, Nicolaitanes. (O God, let me keep my mouth shut till I get to that.) See? What I can see there.... See, until you can see here.... And I'll show you that the messenger to this church age will hate denominations. The Spirit will raise up in the children. It's always been. And now, we got a....

16 Now, if you'll notice this, how it was great here, went out, and finally smothered it all the way out. Then it starts back. Luther pulled it back—justification, sanctification, baptism of the Holy Ghost. And then, right at

the end-time he smothers it right down, until this is almost completely gone out. There's just a little teeny bit there, and that's when He screams that if He don't cut the work short for the elected's sake, there will be no flesh saved, see. There you are, right at the end-time. Now bear that in mind.

17 Now we're going to start on this Smyrna church age. First, I want to break it down here on some paper that I have. Now, the second church age being Smyrna, and I believe you'll all agree with me—or hope you do, or half way, anyhow, that Irenaeus was the star to that church age.

He was God's messenger, 'cause he swept the country, into France (Gaul), down in there, and he established churches. And every one of them was established upon the baptism of the Holy Ghost, speaking in tongues, raising the dead, healing the sick, stopping the rains, and performing miracles daily. They knowed that the living God lived among the people. That was the man of God, 'cause Jesus said, "No man can do...." Or, the people said, "No man can do these works except God be with him." It was Nicodemus that told Jesus that.

18 Now, a city of commerce, a trading outlet to Lydia and to the west, the third largest city in Asia, a great harbor city; noted for wealth, temples, buildings, schools, medicine and science. Jews lived at Smyrna, and they evangelized the Smyranean people.

Polycarp was the first bishop of Smyrna. Polycarp, and other faithful servants, established the deep faith of God in the believing Smyrneans. Early church fathers gave exhortation of the truth to Smyrna. The church age of Smyrna, the name of the church was Samara ... Smyrna, rather. That means bitterness, myrrh. It's associated with dead, 'cause they were dying—

19 a persecuted church. God called them persecuted.

God looked upon their persecutions, and gave grace to bear it. He looked upon his tribulations, and gave them victory over death. Looked upon their poverty and gave them riches in Him. The church of Smyrna passed through the fiery furnace of tribulations, but was a sweet smelling savor unto Him. That's that remnant now, not the whole Smyranean church; just the remnant I'm speaking of.

The great ten days of tribulation means ten years of the bloodiest persecution. I don't know whether I can spell this name or pronounce it, or not. This was the emperor at that time. I believe was the bloodiest one of all of them since Nero in 67. D-i-o-c-l-e-t-i-a-n.

During the year of 303 to 312 A.D.,

20 God exhorts Smyrna to be faithful unto death as He was, "And I will

unto thee that thou might take courage, for I shall visit my people with great power. I shall vindicate my Word (saith the Lord). I shall prove my people, for I say unto thee that I shall try them and I shall perfect them, and they shall know that I am the great almighty God that has redeemed them, (saith the Lord.)"] Amen.

[A brother speaks in another tongue. Blank spot on tape. Sister speaks in another tongue. A brother gives an interpretation: "I say unto thee, my people, this night that as I have spoken again this evening unto thee, thou must search thine heart. Thou must recognize Me this night for I come into thy midst to bring thee these tidings, not to frighten thee. For I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but I walk among thee this day.

"I say unto thee, my people, that thou should persevere in faith; that thou should lay aside these fancies and these feelings for personal affections; that thou shouldst set thine heart upon thy God; that thou should depart from foolishness; that thou shouldst put these human ways away from thee; that thou shouldst turn unto my Spirit, and allow Me to glorify my name through thy being.

"I say unto thee this night, be zealous, and turn from thy foolishnesses. Cast aside thy fear, for I am thy God that watches over thee this night, and mine eyes shall run to and fro. As I have spoken, so will I perform it even unto the end.

"Therefore, look unto Me, and believe Me, and repent from thy wickedness, and from thine unbelief, and from thy fears; and come unto Me, and serve Me." Thus saith the Spirit of the living God.]

Amen. "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." I love Him.... Worship now. See what He'll do. If you have never loved Him before, would you want to love Him now? Would you stand up and recognize Him, take Him as your Saviour? God bless you, brother.

And purchased (Someone else will stand, say,

"I want Him now, I want to love Him."?)

salvation

On Calvary's.... (God bless you sister,

God bless you back there, young lady).

I love Him ... ("He that has an ear, let him

hear what the Spirit saith to the church.")

.....He first loved me,

Was John the Baptist, but he died like a man.
 Then came the Lord Jesus, they crucified Him,
 He taught that the Spirit would save men from sin.
 There was Peter and Paul, and John the divine,
 They gave up their lives so this gospel could shine.
 They mingled their blood, like the prophets of old,
 So the true Word of God could honest be told.
 There's souls under the altar, these martyrs, crying,
 "How long?"
 For the Lord to punish those who've done wrong.
 (Listen! Quickly!)
 But there's going to be more who'll give their life's
 blood
 For this Holy Ghost gospel and its crimson flood.
 It's dripping with blood, yes, it's dripping with blood,
 This Holy Ghost gospel is dripping with blood,
 The blood of disciples who died for the truth,
 This Holy Ghost Gospel keeps dripping with blood.

92 Oh, there's going to be.... [A sister speaks in another tongue; a brother gives an interpretation: "Yea, I say unto thee, my people: As the servant of the living God has brought forth his word unto thee this night, I say unto thee that the hour is upon the world. Yea, I speak unto thee my people that thou might be prepared; yea, that thou might search thine heart. ("Yea," saith the Lord.) For I say that around the world this hour, there are many evil spirits now moving in high places. Yea, there are being things now prepared (saith the almighty God), that shall bring these things to pass that my servant has spoke about.

"And I speak unto thee, my people, that when that hour has fully come, yea, when I shall bring these things to pass, yea, when thou shall be demanded to make decisions in thine heart as to what thou would do, I say unto thee this night, wilt thou stand for the truth? Yea, will thou believe Me (saith the Almighty God)? Will thou purpose in thine heart to follow me, even as I paved the way for thee?

"And I say unto thee my sons and daughters, tonight, be thou not discouraged, for I say there are dark days that lie before thee. But I speak

give you a crown of life, as the Father has given me." God promised the overcomer in tribulations the victory over the second death. "Fear not them which can kill the body, but he that can destroy the soul," that kill the soul. The Smyrneans was to endure to the end. "Fear not man, and a crown of life will be given you."

The persecution of Christianity in the ages are typed in the church ages of Smyrna, are very important. We want to get to it just in a little bit, the Lord willing. Now, if some of you miss some of these ... if I write them a little too fast for the rest of the class, then you can certainly get them from us anytime you want to. We'll be glad to give them to you.

21 Now on the 2nd chapter and the 8th verse, we begin tonight. Now, what did we leave Him on last night? He certainly hated that Nicolaitane. Is that right? Now what does God do? What we have found out first? The revelation of Jesus Christ, who He is and what He is. Now the next great thing we find out, that He hates anything that'll put anything to rule over His church besides Himself. He is a jealous God.

How I'd like to stop ('cause we just got four verses here), just to quote a little something. How many can remember when the good prophet, Samuel ... when all of Israel wanted to act like the rest of the world? Do you remember that? And the prophet told them, said, "You're wrong." But they wanted to act like the Philistines, and like the rest of them.

Well, that's exactly what happened in this very first church age. It's strange that people don't want God to lead them. They want to follow ... they want some man. Israel made the greatest mistake it ever made when.... Grace had already provided them a prophet (a leader), provided them a lamb as an atonement, and provided them food from the heavens, and all the good things that grace had provided them; and still, in Exodus 19, they wanted a law. They wanted to make doctors of divinity, and have some men.... They wanted to have something to do into it, too.

22 Man's always trying to outsmart the very creator that made him, and he doesn't do a thing but kill hisself.

As a few Sundays ago I preached on the "Hybrid Religion," and that's exactly. When you hybreed anything it can never ... it's done. It's finished. It can't come back no more. A mule can never breed back, and have another mule, because he's a mule. He's a hybrid. Fine corn—you can't raise fine corn off of fine hybrid corn. It won't even ... it might come up ... it's no good at all. You can't do it. Anything that's hybrid is no good.

And a hybrid religion is no good. As long as you're trying to add something to what God said, or do something that God don't want you to do, it's a hybrid religion. It might look pretty. Oh, hybrid corn will outshine

the natural corn. An old mule will outwork two horses. Well, that's.... It ain't working, brethren; it's grace that we're thinking of. Not by works are we saved, but by grace. So that might....

I hope you don't think these remarks.... You're sitting under strain, and I feel it up here, see, because there's Presbyterian, Methodists, and all kinds in here. We know that. And so, I feel it, and you have to relax yourself a little once in a while, get that ... shake-off, like.

23 Now listen. Anything that's hybrid is no good. You've got to take the original the way God made it. Then you've got something that's real.

Now, we find out then, that this church of Israel.... As they passed on, God had fed them and taken care of them and done everything for them. And finally they looked over to the Philistines, and the Amorites, and different ones, and said, "We want a king. They got something we ain't got."

That's the same thing that people does today. One of these ... our sisters, will look over at the television and see Gloria Swanson —or whoever, some of them women—with a certain kind of a dress on, and they just can't stand it till they get one, see. You see some woman downtown, "Oh, isn't that darling?" What do you care what she wears?

People are just that way. I said, "It's the day of impersonation." Somebody wants to impersonate the other. You take.... There's so many Elvis Presleys now, I tell you, you couldn't stack them up in boxcars, because he become popular. Carnal impersonations.

24 We have the same thing in religion. I was reading the history of Martin Luther. And any of you historians know, they said it wasn't a mysterious thing that Luther could protest the Catholic church, and get by with it; but the greatest mystery was he could hold his head above all the fanaticism that followed his revival, and still stay with the Word. That's the miracle, how God kept him clear and straight.

25 Now, so they come to this Samuel. They said, "Make us a king." And the Lord told him that He rejected that idea—just exactly what He rejected here with organization. Just like He rejected that, He rejects organization. He don't reject organism, but organization. Organism, we have to have that. But organization we don't have to have, because it draws lines. "We are So-and-so."

"Are you a Christian?"

"I'm Methodist."

"Are you a Christian?"

"I'm Baptist."

Now let's really sing, it:

Oh, one of them, one of them,

I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them;

Hallelujah!

One of them, one of them,

I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them.

89 Would you be willing to be a martyr for Him, of Smyrna? If it come to the spot that you had to face death, or take it back, would you face it? Yes, sir! O God, it would be a pleasure! Yes, sir! That's the way I want to go—right in the pulpit. That's right.

I thought I got it ... was going to get it in Germany here, not long ago. Oh, they was going to shoot me through a night scope, and German soldiers run all around me and held back like that. I thought, "What a wonderful thing it would be to die for my Lord, right here on the field." Oh, my! What a wonderful thing!

90 Well, let me sing you a little song. Can I? Have you got time for just a little bit of one? All right. I can't sing it; I'll talk it. Oh, I've always wanted to sing. And some of these days, when you get over to your lovely big home up there in Paradise, way down at the end of the woods down there—where Russell Creach and I will be for this hunting, you know—way down at the end of the woods, there's a little cabin over there that Brother Neville sings about: "Build me a Cabin in the Corner [I thought he was talking about my place] in Gloryland."

One of these mornings when you walk out on your great porch over there, and look around like that, way down there in the corner you'll hear somebody singing: "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me."

You'll say, "Well, bless God, old Brother Branham made it. There he is. I hear him standing over there right now, singing 'Amazing Grace.'"

It'll be amazing grace that brought me there. That's right.

91 But it's dripping with blood, yes, (that's why

I'm preaching this) it's dripping with blood,

This Holy Ghost gospel is dripping with blood,

The blood of disciples who died for the truth.

This Holy Ghost gospel keeps dripping with blood.

The first one to die for this Holy Ghost plan,

Hallelujah!

One of them, I'm one of them,

I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them.

How many's glad of that tonight? Oh, my!

Come, my brother, seek this blessing

That will cleanse your heart from sin,

That will start the joy-bells ringing

And will keep your soul on flame;

Oh, it's burning now within my heart,

Oh, glory to His name,

I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them.

I'm one of them, I'm one of them,

I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them;

Hallelujah!

One of them, I'm one of them,

I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them.

88 Now while we sing this next verse, I want you to shake hands, like you do each night, all the Methodist, and Baptist, and Presbyterian. Shake hands with one another. And even be friendly enough to chew each other's chewing gum, if you can. Now just be real, real friendly. Be sociable now while we sing it:

I'm one of them, one of them,

I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them;

One of them, one of them,

I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them.

Though these people may not learned be,

Or boast of worldly fame,

They have all received their Pentecost,

Baptized in Jesus' name;

And they're telling now, both far and wide,

His power is just the same,

I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them.

That don't mean no more than a pig in a pen. That has nothing to do with it, not at all. A Christian....

I asked a girl one night on the platform, "Are you a Christian?"

She said, "Well, I give you to understand, I burn a candle every night," like that had anything to do with Christianity.

Another man said, "Well, I'm an American. Sure."

Well, that's got nothing to do with it. Not a thing. You're a Christian because you belong to another kingdom (that's right), and you're in another kingdom above.

26 Now, what did Samuel do? Just the same thing that God did here. Samuel called Israel together. He said, "Now, listen to me. I want to ask you something. Has there ever been one time that I ever told you anything that wasn't true?" Said, "I'm God's prophet among you. Tell me one time I ever told you anything in the name of the Lord that didn't come to pass." That's what Samuel said to them.

He said, "And hasn't God fed you, and taken care of you, and done all these things?" Said, "You're doing sin by trying to act like the other nations." "Oh," he said, "I want to ask you something else. Have I ever took any money away from you? Have I ever begged you for an offering? Or have I ever told you anything in the name of the Lord that didn't come to pass?"

They said, "No, you never took our money. That's true. And you've never told us anything in the name of the Lord that didn't come to pass."

He said, "Then hear me. You're sinning by trying to act like the rest of them."

But they wanted a king anyhow, regardless of whether it was right or wrong. They wanted to carry out their idea. That's the same thing the church did right here at Ephesus. They'd taken the Nicolaitane doctrine. And when they did, it pushed it right in to convert paganism and Christianity together, and caused a fifteen hundred years of Dark Ages. And when Luther pulled them out ... if the second round, the Lutherans, didn't do the same thing they did back in Ephesus! Exactly.

27 Now, if you'll notice, the candlesticks didn't sit quite like that. They started down in this way, come up. Well, the highest one away from where he was standing was this one up here. And Christianity gradually smothered out, as it went from where he was standing in the shape of the cross, as we'd seen Him in the 4th chapter, in the shape of the cross like this. And this was His right hand; that was His left hand.

Now, right here, He had His hand on this church, and on that church.

He was both Alpha and Omega, and of course, all that was in between the two, all the other letters. But He specifically said, "Alpha and Omega." He had a rainbow over His head, which was His covenant.

28 Now, if you notice, the light of Pentecost where it started, gradually smothered out. These men, Irenaeus, Polycarp, all the rest of them, sealed their testimony with their blood, until it finally squeezed Christianity into the darkest of days.

Now, look, the first age—the other side of that great hump coming over—was a little bit of light, more light, then more light. See how it begins to shine again, coming unto that day? And now at the end of this age, it's predicted here that it'd come to a Laodicean, a lukewarm.... Now, here it is.

Why, if this thing here brought them to this, why would we want that down here in Pentecost? And you know the Bible said there'd be a beast, and we know that's the Roman papacy. That's exactly right. And then, they would form an image to that beast.

What is an image? Something made like it. And that's the confederation of churches, and Pentecost is in it. It'll come a time where you'll either belong to an organization, or you can't keep your door open. Now you see if that isn't true. That's the reason we pound it to death. Yes, sir.

Even more than that, they'll try to stick you so bad, till they try to ... won't let you buy nor sell unless you've got that organization mark on you. It brings it right in,

29 just exactly like that day. They burned them, they.... I stood there in that arena, wept like a baby when I'd look up there where the gladiators would sit, in that old arena there and see them things; and know that many of my Christian brethren was eaten by lions, and tore to pieces on the ground there, and women, and little children, and things. And I think, if they all went down in faith, would I let them down now? No, sir, brother! God, let me stand for the faith that was once delivered to the saints, that same thing, no matter how unpopular!

30 Somebody's always wanting to say, "Well...." Someone said not long ago.... Oh, how many great ministers on the field has called me and said, "Brother Branham, if you don't stop that, every organization will be against you."

"Why," I said, "there's one that won't be. That's the one that's in heaven. That's the one I'm looking for," see.

Now, I love people in every organization. Sure. But have I ever told you anything in the name of the Lord didn't come to pass? Has everything

anything. You just have to be born into that kingdom. Now, if you want your fellowship in the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, wherever you want it, that's up to you, see. You put your fellowship with anybody you want to. But I'll tell you one thing: when you're born again, you know, "birds of a feather...." My!

85 Someone asked me one time, said, "Brother Branham, you told them people, 'Go on back to the Methodist church.'"

I said, "Sure. Let them throw them out. They have no place to go." So then.... So, go on back. It won't be very long, you see. It won't be very long. They'll be right back again.

You know, one time in the ark, the place of safety, Noah.... There was a big flood come. And so, Noah turned the crow out of the ark, and he just went on cawing, and looking around. Why, he was satisfied, 'cause he was a vulture to begin with. He could fly from one old dead carcass, and eat a belly full off of this mule, and go over there on this old sheep, and eat a belly full off of him, and something else. Well, there was just all kinds of old dead carcasses laying around.

So the crow will just sit down there, and caw around. "Boy, I'm having me a jubilee all by myself," just cawing away.

86 But when they turned the little dove out, he was a different nature. That stink, he couldn't stand it. Why? A dove hasn't got any gall. He's the only bird that doesn't have a gall. He couldn't digest it. So, the only thing he could do is get right back to the ark, and beat on the door.

Just go anywhere you want to. Only thing I'm asking you to do is just come into the kingdom. And I know where you'll go. You won't be able to stand it anymore, brother. You'll say, "I've crossed the separating line. I've left this world behind." Yes, sir. It sure is.

87 Oh, they were gathered in the upper room,

All praying in His name,

They were baptized with the Holy Ghost,

And power for service came;

Now what He did for them that day

He'll do for you the same,

I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them.

(Aren't you?)

One of them, I'm one of them,

I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them;

little bunch that went through there, and come out here, here, here.

When that virgin, when she seen in the seventh watch that.... Now remember, there were seven virgins. Is that right? I mean, five virgins went out ... ten virgins went out to meet the Lord. Five was wise, and five was foolish. Is that right? And now in the watches though, there were seven watches. And at the end of the seventh watch, some slept from this watch, this one, this one, this one, that, see. Seventh watch, there was a voice went out, "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." And they rose and trimmed their lamps. And all these others rose down through here. Oh, won't that be a wonderful time!

83 I used to sing a little song:

It's a wonderful time for you,

What a wonderful time for me;

If we all prepare to meet Jesus our King,

What a wonderful time it will be.

A wonderful time for you,

A wonderful time for me:

If we all prepare to meet Jesus our King,

What a wonderful time it will be.

(Won't that be wonderful?)

O won't it be wonderful there,

Having no burdens to bear?

Joyously singing with heart bells all ringing,

O won't it be wonderful there?

84 How many of you knows that you'll get home? How many knows you'll go out that door? You don't know. How many knows if you do go out you will come in again? You cannot tell. So, don't let this night fail. Don't you fail God in this night, for this might be the last night that you'd have a time, or a chance.

Who are you, anyhow? Where'd you come from? Where are you going? The only book in the world can tell you what it is, is this blessed old Bible here. And that's the Bible that we believe in. That's the God that we believe in. And if you're not into that bride, into this little bunch of minorities, way down here today being squeezed out by creeds and denominations, and so forth.... If you're not in that little group....

Now, you don't have to join this Tabernacle. You don't have to join

been said and been done right? Have I ever begged you for money? Then stay out of the organizations. You stay free in Christ. Let the Holy Spirit always move in and out the church.

31 The only thing the matter, get all these little differences away from you—little isms, and little funny feelings around you for brethren, and things like that. Shake it away. Don't let no root of bitterness ever get into your soul. If you do, it'll canker you. Right. Keep love. I don't care how much people hate you, you love them anyhow. If you can't do that, you need ... you ain't sealed. You got a loose place yet. So come on back, and get that sealed up right good with the blood of Christ. It'll cleanse you from all roots of bitterness. Yes.

32 Now, see, but we're trying again.

The Pentecostal blessing fell about 1906, somewhere in there. There's a minister sitting with us tonight, a missionary from Tibet, one of.... I don't say it because he's present. I hope he didn't go home. I think he's still here—was going to speak for us a little before I come down. And that man remembers the first of Pentecost. There wasn't any organization. Everybody had things in common.

Oh, how easy it is to take the wrong step right there, and how good it looks to the intellectual.

33 Look, little did Israel know when they was standing out there on the bank a-shouting.

Now, you say, "This kind of religion is something new." Why, it's the oldest there is. Sure. Even before the world was ever made, they were shouting and praising God. God said so. Ask Job where was he when the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy. That was before the world was ever created.

34 But now look at Israel ... had seen miracles. That's the early Pentecost Israel, the Pentecost of that day. Now they had been brought up out of Egypt. God had blessed them, give them all kinds of great signs and wonders, and delivered them. And when they stood upon that bank, and had a Pentecostal meeting.... They did. Now listen. Moses sang in the Spirit, and Miriam took a tambourine and run down the bank, beating this tambourine, dancing in the Spirit, and the daughters of Israel followed her, dancing in the Spirit. If that ain't a Pentecostal meeting, I never seen one!

Little did they believe that the promised land was forty years ahead of them. It was only about forty miles, but it'd take them forty years to get forty miles. Is because they chose the wrong thing. They chose to have a law, instead of letting the Holy Spirit lead them—the pillar of fire—take them on through, and lead them. They wanted to have something to do

themselves. They wanted to have certain priests, and certain dignitaries, and a little theology they could fuss about, instead of just going on and letting the Holy Ghost lead them.

They were in the Spirit. God had provided everything. But they had to have something to do into it,

35 just like hybreeding again. Let the cow alone. Let the horse alone. Let the food alone. Science claimed in "Reader's Digest," the article of it, if they keep on hybreeding food, and people eat it.... Like chickens. They got that poor chicken till he ain't got no wings or legs. And if it lays, it lays itself to death. It can only live a year. And the tissue is so soft, you can't hardly eat it. And people eating it, it's perverting people. That's right.

You know homosexuals is on the increase about forty percent in the United States, over a year ago? And did you know that science claims that women are getting wider in the shoulders and narrow in the hips, and men are getting narrow in the shoulders and wider in the hips? You're eating a perverted seed. You're eating perverted stuff. Your body was made to thrive on the natural thing, and what's it doing? It's changing even the natural course of men and women, till Hollywood, even our government, and everything, is full of perverts. What's he doing? They're bringing it on themselves by their own tree of knowledge, killing themselves.

36 Go back to the beginning. Let nature alone. Let God alone. Keep the church in the Holy Ghost, and get away from all these bishops, and popes, and all kinds of doctrines. Go back to where we started at. Go back.

...Jesus would come right today....

"I'm a Methodist."

He'd say, "It wasn't so from the beginning."

"I'm Presbyterian."

"It wasn't so from the beginning."

What was at the beginning? A Pentecostal experience of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. That's the way it began. But, see, we had to pervert it. Oh, it makes it prettier. Sure. That little church down there, dancing and shouting, and down on the street; and people throwing rocks at them, making fun of them, and everything like that, that ain't very pretty.

But now we got the great doxology, and the Apostles' Creed, and, oh, Dr. Ph.D., LL, double L.D., So-and-so, for our pastor; he come out and say, "Ah-men," like a calf with the cramps, and go on like that, all those kind of things. (Excuse me. I didn't mean to say that. Forgive me. I didn't mean to say that like that, see. I didn't mean that. That ain't becoming to a servant of God.

Now, don't go away and say, "Brother Branham don't believe in hell." Brother Branham does believe in hell. The Bible teaches there's a hell. Just as sure as there's a place for rest, there's a place of punishment. And God will certainly make a soul that sins against Him be punished. For rejecting Jesus Christ as your Saviour, you certainly will be punished for it.

But there'll be a time when you'll be no more. But how many million years that'll take for you to go back to that, I don't know. But some time....

80 You're a time being until you're born again, then you're an eternal being. And the only way you can get it is have part of God in you, being eternal life. Can you see it? Certainly. "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

I love Him. Don't you? I'm so glad to have eternal life. That doesn't bother me anymore—because we have eternal life now, and I know that. And I trust that everybody will have it, all of us.

81 Irenaeus, yes. I had a note here on Irenaeus about, "Read this history." That the reason Irenaeus was chosen is because that he had the signs of the Pentecostal original church following him.

Now, if God.... How many believes that the church began at Pentecost? All right. How many believes that God endorsed the church at Pentecost? All right, sir. Then, if that was God's first church, and that's what He called a church.... And He's the vine now, we're the branches. If the vine ever puts forth another branch, what will it be? Pentecostal. Now, maybe not by name. Now, we got names of Pentecost, but that's no more than Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal. That don't mean a thing, see. That's just a name. But as long as you got a Pentecostal experience in your heart, Pentecost in your soul, giving you eternal life, then God has promised you that You'll never be touched with the second death; that you got eternal life and can't be touched with the second death, see. You got....

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. Now don't grieve it, do things that's wrong. If you do you'll pay for it, 'cause the Bible said, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby you are sealed until the day of your redemption." Is that right? Grieve not the Holy Spirit.

82 Oh, it's going to be a wonderful day some morn, some of these times.

To show you that the resurrection's going to be universal, "There'll be two in the field, and I'll take one; and two in the bed, and I'll take one," see. It'll be night one place, and daylight on the other side of the earth be a universal resurrection, that rapture. The trumpet of God shall sound, and every one of these ... of this little church here, here, here; and even that

be.... The Bible never says it's eternal; it says everlasting hell. Don't say the word "eternal"; it says an "everlasting" hell. Now it's prepared for the devil and his angels. An everlasting hell, not an eternal one.

Now after.... That soul may be tormented there for its doings for ten million years, for all I know. I don't know what everlasting might be in God's sight. It might be for five minutes. It might be for a million years. It might be for ten million years. But there will come a time when that soul will cease to be.

77 Here's what the Bible said, see. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt by the second death." The first death is separating from our loved ones. We'll go in the presence of God. Never out of His presence, see.

Now, if there's a second death, then it'd have to be the death of the soul. And then he that overcomes the world, or overcomes the things of the world has eternal life, and shall not be touched by the second death. There you are. Eternal life. But the sinner....

The Bible said, "The woman that lives in pleasure is dead while she is alive." Is that right? "The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die." What is "die"? Completely separate, no more, see. Now, it's cut off as life. It's cut off; there's no more to it.

How long will it be to take that? It'll go down through the same process it come in, and it'll come to a place till there will neither ... be nothing left of it. It'll just go back from ever what it's made out of.

78 We can take the cell, and break the cell to one cell, to another cell, till you come down to the first cell. Break into that cell. Then you got the chemistry of the blood. You come into different chemistries of the blood. And then you come down to a little part in that cell that's life. They can't find that. They know nothing about it. Now, that life will finally come to a spot till it is no more.

What is the chemistry of that life? I don't believe it has any chemistry. It'd be spiritual. And then in that, finally it'll completely separate, and be no more. That's what the Bible said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." And they that overcome in these church ages here shall not be hurt by the second death. The body dies first; the soul dies next, and it will be no more, see. Now, do you believe that's the Bible that said that?

79 Now remember, if hell is eternal, then the Bible's wrong when it said hell was created. And then if a man's going to burn for eternity in hell, then he'd have to have eternal life to be conscious, to burn. Is that right? Well, how many forms of eternal life is there? One. That's right, just one eternal life.

37 But, look, all them.... It just come upon my mind, see.) But stand, and say all them different things like that, practice before the ... you know, say, "Now, no, you don't say that right. Ah-h-h-men."

I like a good, old Pentecostal meeting where the power of God's falling and just screaming, shouting, and praising God, having a great time. That's the way the Spirit's got ahold of the people. But you can't hear a "Amen" hardly anymore; it's "Ah-men." However, there's where we get, you see—these organizations, stiff like.

38 Now was there a prophecy concerning that? You remember Paul's prophecy last night? "I know that after my departure, grievous wolves shall enter in among you. And men of your own class here, right in your own church (them Roman Catholic church, coming up), will raise up among you, and pull away disciples after them." And Paul's "wolves," we find out, become Nicolaitanes.

Listen to the Spirit speak through the prophet again. "In the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves."

"I'm Dr. So-and-so. Don't you tell me nothing about it now."

"I'll give you to understand I'm a Presbyterian. Hallelujah!" Or,

"I'm a Pentecostal." What difference does that make, if you ain't Pentecostal by nature?—the experience of it, see. Yes, sir.

"I belong to the Assemblies."

"I belong to the Church of God."

What difference does that make to God? You got to belong to the kingdom up there, see. That's right.

39 Now, you see all these things—just a conglomeration of gaity. Now, it said they would be heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Oh, they can't go to church on Sunday night as long as there's some good television program on. Oh, my! Always ... even the churches has got ball teams, and soup suppers, and cricket parties, and "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, and despisers of those that are good." These despising those, see. These despising those, choking them out—despisers of those that are good.

Oh, you say, "They're communists, brother." Oh, no. No, no.

40 "Heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, despisers of those that are good, having a form [a denominational experience, see], having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

What would it be in this day, see? "Having a form of godliness." Go to church just as pious as you can be on Sunday; and put on the shorts on Sunday afternoon, mow the yard and have the Oertel's 92 out. And the pastor get outside and smoke a cigarette, and come back in. Oh. "Having a form of godliness,"

"Well, pastor, they got a church up there. They tell me that the lady got healed the other day from a...."

"Nonsense. Days of miracles is past."

"Well, you know what? I was up to a little church the other night, that little mission down on the corner. And there was somebody getting up there speaking something, jab...."

"Oh, honey, don't you never hang around such like that. That's mad dogs. My! Don't you fool around that. That's holy rollers. Don't you never...."

41 "Having a form of godliness and denying the power thereof, from such turn away. For this is the sort that goes from house to house and leads silly women led away with divers lusts, never able to learn, or ever come to the knowledge of the truth." That's exactly right. There you are.

Ladies Aid Society, this society, that.... The poor church has got so many societies that it can't even preach the gospel no more. Pastor can't have but twenty minutes, and he has to talk about something else then, see. If he don't, the deacon board will meet him. Yes, sir.

Oh, brother, what does a good pastor have to do today? Just do the best he can, stand out and cut the limbs where they want to, and let the chips fall where they want to, and sling it out there. That's all. Yes, sir. That's right. Don't spare nobody. Just preach the Word, and stay right with it. Just hammer right on away. If they throw you in jail, preach it in jail. If they put you anywhere else, preach wherever you go. Just keep on going, preaching. That's right. Now, that's what's happened. See, they smother you out.

42 Now we're coming to the Smyrna Age. The 8th verse:

...unto the angel of the church of Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

I want you to notice. Every time that He introduces Himself to a church age, He puts forth something of His deity. That's the first thing He tries to make known to the church. That's His deity. He's God.

You see the great issue back here, that Irenaeus and them was fussing about? They tried to say that God in three cosmos, and God in three persons, and God in this....

people. Glory! Jehovah walking down through the church discerning the thoughts of the mind; Jehovah healing the sick; Jehovah speaking through lips, till the man hasn't got no control of hisself; Jehovah coming back in English and translating it. Do you want a sign? Amen!

That was Jehovah come down to a prostitute, rise her up where she's so ... she's so low down till the dogs won't look at her—and wash her white as snow, and give her a heart as pure. Oh, my! Jehovah taking a drunkard laying there in the alley, and the flyblows all over his mouth; and making him preach the gospel out there.... The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us.

74 When He was on earth, He went to the lowest city there was, and to the lowest people there was, and they give Him the lowest name there was. That's right. They treated Him the worst, and called Him the worst name that could be called—Beelzebub, a devil. The lowest they could give Him, man give Him. But God raised Him up, and He give Him a throne so high till He has to look down to see heaven (Amen! Glory!); and give Him a name above every name, and placed Him in heaven and earth, that all the family in heaven and earth is named after Him. That's what man thought of Him; that's what God thought of Him.

O God, let my thoughts be like yours, Father. Yes, sir! O precious name!

75 Now, "He that believeth on me has eternal life." Now, if there's only one form of eternal life and you get it—and we're seeking for it through Jesus Christ—that's God's life. Then when that blood cell was broke on the Son of God, and that little Jehovah that was bottled up on the inside of this man called Jesus, when in Him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily.... And now, when we accept that blood for the remission of our sins, that Spirit that was on ... not a man, but on God.... Glory!

The Bible said the blood of God. Somebody said, "Remember, don't say nothing about the Jews, 'cause He was a Jew." He wasn't a Jew. He was neither Jew nor Gentile. He was God. That's right. He was a created blood. God made it special. It was His own. And through that created blood, we accept it as our pardon because He died the death for us. That blood cell broke, releases that Holy Spirit to come back on us, and now we are sons and daughters of God through a birth of the Spirit. Then the life that was God's—which didn't have no beginning, or neither will it ever have an end—is mine and yours, by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. There you are.

76 Now hell, we'll go back to that a while. I tell you that there cannot be.... I do believe in a burning hell. Yes, sir. The Bible said so, the lake of fire. Now. But that cannot be an ever ... it cannot be an eternal. It could

He told the prophet, "I'll give them an everlasting sign: a virgin shall conceive. A virgin shall conceive and shall bring forth a Son." Amen. "He shall be called Emmanuel, God with us"—the greatest sign that was ever given.

When God, the creator of heavens and earth, made the solar system.... Stand out there at Mt. Palomar and look through that scope yonder, and you can see a hundred and twenty million years of light-space. Break that down in miles. And beyond that's still moons, stars, and worlds. And He made them all—just blowed them off His hands, like that. Yes.

71 And that great creator became my Saviour—come down to a little blood cell (not through a man, but come virgin) to a woman, and took this little pollen from the woman, and formed Himself a little house, and lived in it. Oh! It ought to be striking.

Jehovah! Jehovah over a pile of manure in a barn, crying—Jehovah, in a manger of straw. That's an everlasting sign. Some of these big-headed people.... Jehovah, God, a crying baby (Hallelujah!), in a stinking stable, and then we think we're somebody. Stick your nose up, if it'd rain, it'd drown you—and then, go along thinking you're somebody and Jehovah laying in a stable, over a pile of manure, crying like a little ... any little baby. It ought to be striking. That's the sign.

God said, "I'll give you an everlasting sign." That's a real sign: Jehovah, playing as a boy. Jehovah! Jehovah, working in a workshop, sawing wood like a carpenter. Hallelujah! My, oh, my! Jehovah, washing the feet of fishermen. "I'll give you a sign."

"Oh, but we have to have the clergy, you know, with the robes and all the cards, collars, and...." See? Oh!

72 "I'll give you an everlasting sign." Jehovah, standing in the courtyard with spit on His face; Jehovah, stretched up naked in a body, between heavens and earth. He despised the shame of the cross. We have His statue there with a little rag around Him. 'Course that's just a sculptor did that. They stripped Him naked, embarrassed Him.

Oh! that bunch of hypocrites when that hour come! This is the day of man. The day of the Lord's a-coming. Jehovah ... Jehovah, dying. Yes. Nothing happened. Jehovah praying. Nothing happened. That's right. It ought to be striking. That's an everlasting sign. That's the sign that all men would know.

Then He died. Jehovah died. Then the earth begin to shake. Oh, my!

73 Then He rose up from the grave, and ascended on high; Jehovah, returning in the form of the Holy Ghost to live in His church, among His

He said, "There's no such a thing. It's titles of one being. And that is the almighty God." That's right. So you don't.... They've always had that. And God here in the beginning is introducing Himself, of one of His deities. You see, He's introducing Himself, first over here, "I am He which was, which is, and shall come. I am the Almighty."

Here He starts right off with the Smyrna age now.

43 Now listen to Him.

...unto the angel of the church of Smyrna [and we believe that to be Irenaeus] write; These things saith the first and the last [See, introduced Himself, "I'm God, now, of this church age. I don't want no four or five different gods around here. I'm God," see. That's it.], which was dead, and is alive;...

Amen. Now, that's the introduction. Now, Smyrna means "bitterness," and comes from the word of "myrrh." And the first church had lost their first love, the Ephesian church. And this church had begin to have a root of bitterness coming up in them because that this church—the main church, the big part, the majority of them—always was hammering against the Holy Ghost ruling in the church, and they wanted to rule themselves.

They wanted to set up a priesthood. They wanted to act like the Old Testament people did. They wanted priests. If the pagan gods back there.... Where they was converted they had priests, and so forth, of Jupiter, and priests of Venus, and so forth. They wanted to bring them same things, and make these men.... See, the whole thing is pagan to begin with. All pagans has those priests, and things like that. But the church of the living God, it's foreign to them. Christ is our priest, our high priest. We have a high priest, a table also that we eat at.

44 Now this church had begin to spring up a root of bitterness. Why? It was bitter against those who wanted to continue on with the Holy Ghost. The love had faded away, and they were trying to swap it to creeds and denominations, getting away from the Holy Ghost leadership. Think of that! That's why the bitterness was in them. All right.

Now, the first church, the bitterness started creeping in. The second church a little more. And, finally, it crept right in, because they were making a better church. They thought they were. Right there they had something dignified. The great Roman people could come in. Why? They had a pope. They had great men, cardinals, and so forth. They dressed fine. They got away from all the noise and everything they had, very quiet—showed they was dying. They were dying.

And so, they got dignified, and they made a better body. The first thing up here, they had the whole thing in a big ecclesiastical

denomination—the Roman universal church, the Roman Catholic church in the Dark Age. Well, then they had dignitaries, and they had class.

45 Oh, it was much prettier than when they used to stand out on the street, and have to walk in sheepskin and goatskins; and destitute, and sawed asunder, and laughed at, and made fun of, as Paul said in Hebrews, the 11th chapter. Why, this great big, fine, robed church, with underskirts on, and all this other stuff that they wear like that, sure, it looked dignified: Father, Reverend, Doctor, Father So-and-so. Oh, my! They could put on some real dog there.

But you see, it was a hybrid thing. Hybrid. See, it didn't have any life in it. And it cannot go back no more. That's the reason they never rise. The Lutheran revival never did rise up again. The Wesley revival never did rise up again. The Nazarene revival did not rise up again. Neither will the Pentecostal revival rise up again. Why?

Because you killed it. You hybrid it with the world, with the Nicolaitane idea; not letting the Holy Ghost have His way. That's right. You hybrid the church, and it can't breed itself back again. When you breed back you get more Methodists; Baptists breed back, get more Baptists; Catholic breed back, gets more Catholic. Get the same thing you're shelling off the ear.

But let me tell you something. When the Holy Ghost comes back, it brings new birth and new life, conversion. Baptism of the Spirit brings the church back to itself again; puts life back in it. Hybrid corn don't have life in it. What life it is is just about sapped out. Now we get that in that Dark Age there. What little you have, hold onto it, He said. They about squeezed it out. Now, but it won't reproduce itself again.

Now,

46 but the body of Jesus Christ is not—is not—an organization. The body of Jesus Christ is a mystical body. It is a body and a kingdom that ... the spiritual kingdom that's set upon the earth, by Jesus Christ being the king of this kingdom, the high priest to offer sacrifices for the wayfaring in this kingdom. He's the prophet, the Word, that preaches the truth and brings the light of God in this kingdom. And He is both prophet, priest, and king in this kingdom.

And how do we get in this kingdom? By the denomination? By letter? By hand shaking? But "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body," which is the mystical body of Jesus Christ. And we're baptized in there not by water, not by sprinkling, not by pouring, not by any kind of a water baptism. But by one Spirit, Holy Spirit, we are all baptized into one body (I Corinthians 12).

bleeding, and heard the bleating of it, and it died. And he felt its little body stiffen out, and he was dead. He knowed that ought to be him; the lamb took his place. Them priests took the blood, put it on the altar, and the smoke went up, and it was a prayer of forgiveness for the worshipper. [Blank spot on tape.]

...and that animal life could not come back upon a human, and coincide with the human spirit, because it's animal spirit. Animal life and human life—it couldn't do it. But when a.... That's the reason he went out with the same desire to sin, same thing. Come in for committing adultery, offer up his sacrifice, and go back out, the same thing in his mind. That's right.

68 But here, when the worshipper.... O church of God, don't fail to get this. The worshipper once truly walks up to the Son of God, and by faith lays his hands upon Him, oh, my! Look there in His face, with that spit hanging in His face, the blood running down His face; feel the pains of "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" O brother, when you see what a price ... that died for you, and who it was—Emmanuel, God—dying in your place....

Then what happened? The worshipper then.... When that blood cell was broke in the Son of God.... What made that blood cell? What are you? You're one little cell that come from your father. The female does not have the hemoglobin. (Is that it?). The female only produces the egg, the incubator. She is to pack the brood. But the blood comes from the male. That's the reason the child takes the father's name. And the woman marrying to a man takes his name on account of the children. She becomes an incubator for the child that she shall bear for the man.

69 But, like as I said, a hen can lay an egg; but if she hasn't been with the male bird, it won't hatch. As I said, that's the reason we got so many old cold, formal churches today. They got on this Nicolaitane idea, got a bunch of nests full of rotten eggs. And they never will hatch because they ain't.... You could do anything to them—call them bishops, deacons, and whatever else—they'll never believe in signs following the believer, because they've never been with the mate, Jesus Christ.

But if you ever get fertilized with that mate of the power of God!

70 When that blood cell was broke there on Calvary, and that life that was in there.... Teeny Jehovah! Oh, it ought to be striking.

You know, everybody's looking for a sign. Aren't they? Everybody says, "Oh, show me a sign." The Jew said, "Show me a sign." Let me give you a sign. God gave you a sign one time. They asked for a sign. Israel asked for a sign.

eternal hell.

And the Bible plainly says that hell was created. And if it's created, it isn't eternal. Anything that's eternal never was created. It always was. It's eternal. And the Bible says that hell was created for the devil and his angels. Hell was created; it isn't eternal.

And I do not believe that a person will be eternally punished.

65 I believe that the Bible plainly states here, that, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt by the second death." Now death, the word "death" comes from the ... is this. It's separation. Now, when we are separated from God in sin, we're already dead. The Bible said so. We're alienated from God. We're cut off. We're dead in sin and trespasses. We're an alien to God, and to His commonwealth.

And then when we receive God and have eternal life, we are His children and a part of Him.

66 My little boy there, Joseph, is part of me no matter what he'd ever do. He might not have.... If I was a great, rich, man and had a lot of inheritance, he might ... even inherit anything, but still he's a son. He's part of me. Sure. He's part of me. Now, I can no more deny him than I can deny myself, because he's part of me. The blood test would show that he's mine, see.

And the blood test shows whether you're God's or not, see. You're God's children, and you have eternal life. But the soul that sinneth, that soul shall be separated. Is that right? Then it will be no more.

Now look. Anything that had a beginning has an end, because anything that had a beginning is a creation. But God was not created. He was always God. There's no place He was created. And the only way that we can ever have eternal life is to be part of that creation. Glory!

Oh, if you could see it, see what the Holy Ghost does for you? It's the Holy Ghost, the creator Himself, God the Father in the form of a spirit called Holy Ghost, because it was upon the body called Jesus, His Son that He created—Jesus, the body. That's the reason it had to die. God dwelt in this human flesh, and the blood cell was broke, and the life and the blood cell come back.

67 That's the reason that the old worshipper in the Old Testament could not go away ... he went away with the same condemnation that he had when he come. But in the New Testament, said Hebrews, that the worshipper once purged has no more conscience of sin.

Now, in the Old Testament they brought a lamb. He laid it down, put his hands upon it—the worshipper. The priest cut the throat. He felt the

Yes, we are baptized into this body by one Spirit, Holy Spirit. Then we don't belong to anything but Christ. You are Christ's. It's a mystical kingdom of God that's set up, that we come into it by Holy Spirit baptism. I love that.

47 There are people almost everywhere,
Whose hearts are all on flame
With the fire that fell on Pentecost,
That cleansed and made them clean;
Oh, it's burning now within my heart,
O glory to His name!
I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them.
I'm one of them, I'm one of them.
I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them,
Hallelujah!
One of them, I'm one of them.
Now I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them.
Though these people may not learn to be
[D.D.D., Ph.D, see] ... may not learn to be,
Or boast of worldly fame,
They have all received their Pentecost,
Baptized in Jesus' name;
And they're telling now, both far and wide,
His power is yet the same.
I'm so glad that I can say I'm one of them.
Aren't you glad? Yes, sir, just one of them. That's all.

48 I remember walking down through Memphis. That little old colored lady with her head leaned over there, she said, "Good morning, parson."

I said, "How'd you know I was a parson?"

She said, "The Lord told me a parson's coming down the street, be wearing a tan hat, packing a suitcase." Said, "I knowed you was him when I seen you coming," see.

Oh, she was one of them. That's right. Oh, how God is good.

49 Now I believe something.... [Brother Branham reads a note given to

him:] "The little girl you prayed for Sunday night, from Bedford, is supposed to have just died. This cannot.... Please have prayer." A little girl that they prayed for here Sunday night, from Bedford, has just died, they said. Let's have prayer.

Lord Jesus, I pray that somehow, some way, Lord, let our prayers go through for that child. We commit the little thing to You, our Father God. And we think of those people that were here, and praying, and asking prayer for that little girl. Father God, I ask that this report may not be so, Father. We don't know. But I pray that You'll have mercy and give strength, and let the little thing be raised up, and live for the glory of God. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask it. Amen. May the Lord Jesus add His blessings.

50 Now, a church.... Now, the church name is associated with the nature of its character. Did you notice the Smyrna, meaning "bitter"? And you notice, each one of the church, now, the church name has something to do with the character of the church. I could say something here, but I better not, 'cause you'd get me wrong, see. Your name does too. You might not know it, but it does.

Oh, yes. You say now, "It's numerology." No, it's not. When Jacob was born they called him Jacob, which was "supplanter." But when he wrestled with the angel, God changed his name to Israel, "a prince." Is that right?

Saul was Saul of Tarsus, a mean fellow. But when he come to Jesus, he was called Paul. Simon's name was Simon. When he come to Jesus, he was called Peter, a "little stone." Oh, yes, sir. Your name associates what you're.... It has an impression upon your character.

51 And this church was called Smyrna, because it was dying. Smyrna means bitterness. In other words a root of bitterness was coming up, and was choking it out. It was on its road out to myrrh. That's what they anoint bodies with—myrrh, see. Was ... myrrh and frankincense is an ointment. Myrrh is used to anoint dead bodies after they embalmed them, and so forth. Associated with death, and the church was dying.

And, oh, can't you see today, friends, the great Pentecostal move that did have life a few years ago Can't you see it's being anointed now with myrrh, see? The same ointment was in this church here has come plumb down, and anointing this one down here, dying out because they're going back to ecclesiastical rags, and taking off their white-robed saints!

The little people who stood out there.... And a genuine Holy Spirit spoke with tongues, and manifested God. And, brother, they was honest, and, oh, wool a yard wide. They absolutely was genuine. You could trust them anywhere. Now you don't know what to trust, and who to trust, see.

years, and he was the bloodiest persecutor of all of them. He just sided in with this group, and they murdered the Christians, and killed them, they burned them, they did everything. And it was ten years of the most bloody persecution. And his time and his reign was from 302 until 312.

That ended the Smyrna age, with the issuing in of Constantine. And he come in at 312, Constantine did. That was the ten days of tribulations. And it started with Nero, and ended up with Diocletian. And it started in Nero, was about A.D. 64 when Nero took the throne.

63 Now, the 11th verse is a promise. Now we'll have this just before closing:

He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Now I got to say something here, that in order.... If I think it in my heart, and don't say it, then I'm a hypocrite, see. I want you to notice something here in this scripture. And I think it was one of the biggest puzzles to me for so long, until I found out. Now let's read that real close, now, see.

He that has an ear [in other words, has the ear to hear, see. It's open to the Spirit] let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; ... [Now see, this same thing, this persecution and everything, comes ... every part of it laps over in every church, the churches.] Spirit says to the churches; He that overcometh ... [In what church? Ephesian? Yeah. All right. Smyrna? Yeah. All of them.] He that overcomes [in all the churches] shall not be hurt of the second death.

He in the Laodicean church that overcomes what? Overcomes the Nicolaitanes, overcomes the things of the world, overcomes these denominations, overcomes these priesthoods, overcomes everything of the world and sells out, and loves Christ. He'll not be hurt of the second death. Why? He has got eternal life. Eternal life can't die. Jesus said, "He that heareth me has eternal life, shall never die. I'll raise him up in the last day."

64 Now, now there.... Now you're going to ... be many disagree with this, but I want you to think real hard before you make your decision, see. I'm going to say something now. That's the reason I don't believe that there is an eternal hell. There cannot be an eternal hell, 'cause if there ever was an eternal hell, there always was an eternal hell, 'cause eternal....

There's only one form of eternal life, and that's what we're all striving for. And if you're going to burn forever, and for eternity, then you'll have to have eternal life burning. Then it would be God burning. You can't have

So these people wasn't the one, the first church. But in that church was the characteristic that would come out in the Smyrna church later on. Now, then, they was to wear a martyr's crown. Many of them was to be killed.

60 Now let's take the 10th verse, as we read this:

Fear none of these things [the synagogue of Satan] which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast ... you into prison, that ye may be tried; and that you shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Oh, my! They were told not to fear when they were called on to die for their religion. Now, Sister Wood, wherever you are, I hope this helps you. Sister Wood was telling me the other day, she couldn't hardly understand why that some could be delivered, and others not. Sometimes you have to know....

God told these people, "Now, don't you fear about ... 'cause Satan's going to cast you in there, because that this Nicolaitane outfit that's come and pushing you in, because I'm going to let you die for my cause. But I'll give you a crown of life at that day." So don't....

61 Now watch. He said.... Now, if you notice as we read this 10th verse.... Let me read it over again:

Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days: but be thou faithful unto.... [Did you notice that's not until? Not until death, but unto death. You get it?] Be thou faithful unto death [See, and they did.]....

Now He said Satan.... Did you notice who He classed as the one that was doing it? Now, this synagogue of Satan was the Nicolaitanes. We know that. Wasn't it? Then it was an organization, a priesthood that was rising up that would make these people suffer; and they were to be faithful to the gospel unto death. Did you notice in a marriage ceremony? Not "until death do we part," but "unto death do we part," see. Now, "unto" and "until" is different. Now, they was to be faithful to Christ unto death. "Go right on down to death with it. Don't be afraid, for I'll give you a crown."

62 Now this ten days that they talk of here, the ten days: a day in the Bible represents a year. And the ten days was the last ten years of the reign of this D-i-o-c-l-e-t-i-o-n, Diocletian? Diocletian. Diocletian. That was that great emperor that reigned in the last.... Well, there's several emperors reigned during the Ephesian church age, and Nero, I believe, was one.

And this Diocletian here was the last one that reigned, in the last ten

There's something's happened. Something's happened. What is it? They're being anointed with bitterness, raising up. One....

52 What caused it? One come in....

There was a church called ... the first was a General Council. Then they called it the Assemblies of God. Out of the Assemblies of God come the Church of God. From the Church of God.... Then they begin to look across, and say, "You're Assemblies." The other one say, "You're Church of God." Then out of that come the United Pentecostal Church of God, on an issue.

And then, the first thing you know, instead of accepting light and walking in it, why, they done organized themselves till they couldn't accept light. Now, when the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ was brought forth instead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to the Assemblies of God, they had already anchored themselves so they couldn't change it. And they know it's the truth. I challenge any of them to show that it's not right by the Bible. It's absolutely the truth. But what can they do? They can't do it. See, they'd break up their creed. They can't....

53 Then what did the Oneness do? Instead of accepting it and going ahead, they got starchy. "Bless God forever. We got the light, and you haven't. We're the...." What'd they do? They organized it.

You can't organize God. God's even without form, the Bible said. No, nothing formal about God.

Now, then the Assemblies tried to organize Him, and make theirs the real church. And then the Oneness come along, tried to organize theirs. And they had more light. So what'd they do? They blowed it out by their own selfish, bitter way they went about it. Instead of giving it out with salt and sweetness, they tried to disfellowship the other one—had nothing to do with him—and that's what done it. It'd swept on, then. The first thing you know, up come another one. They got this ... and now they've broke up.

One said, "He's coming on a white horse."

The other one said, "Coming on a white cloud."

"Bless God, I'll start me an organization over here."

See the way they do? It spread myrrh. What did it do? It shut off brotherhood.

54 Many a woman, man, tonight, in the Assemblies of God, would like to come, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, knowing that it's the God's truth. They'd be excommunicated if they did it. And a-many Oneness, or the.... Now, I'm not Oneness. I don't believe in the oneness

the way they do. I don't believe in Jesus like.... They'll say, "Jesus." There's a lot of Jesuses. It's the Lord Jesus Christ. That's right.

Now, and I believe that different from what they do. They baptize in the name of Jesus for regeneration; that being baptized—regeneration—brings in Christ to you for your water baptism. I don't believe that. I believe regeneration comes by the blood of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. That's right. Baptism is only an outward act of an inward work of generation that's done been done, see. So, I don't agree with that. That's all right. But they're all my brethren.

55 When I first started out as a Baptist preacher, they'd come around saying, "Brother Branham, will you come over here? We got it."

"We got it over here."

I said, "Neither one of you. I stand right between the two groups and say, 'We are brothers,' don't care what." I don't care if a man disagrees. That don't make one speck of difference to me. He's still my brother.

I got a brother that likes apple pie. I like cherry the best, but I ain't going to disfellowship him. He can eat his apple pie, and I eat my cherry pie. And I put "calf slobbers" on top of mine. If he don't want it, why, he can have it. You know that ... what is that whipped stuff they put on it? You know—whipped cream. I like it. Getting too old now to eat it, but it's a ... but that's what I like. If he don't like it, he don't have to eat it. That's all right. I'll eat mine. But he's still my brother. That's right. And so, I like that.

I like a fellowship. But when we draw lines like this, and say, "No. This is our denomination," and won't reach over and shake hands with the next man and say, "Bless God, brother," my! That's when you call fellowship. If you don't, you get that root of bitterness just like the Smyrneans got back there, and you cause the same thing. All right. So their name was bitter.

56 The Nicolaitanes kept smothering them out until the Dark Ages. Luther's age brought out the first step of grace. A little light began to shine. Then come forth.... After that, come John Wesley with sanctification, grew a little brighter. And then come the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the Pentecostals, bringing back again the faith of the fathers. But they could not keep it that way. Thus they had to organize it, and then they started right back into Nicolaitane again—just exactly what the Bible said they would do.

57 Now, I have to watch here, or I'll get too much time took up. Let's get to the 2nd verse, or the ... that'd be the 9th verse. All right. Now the persecution, the 9th verse:

I know thy works, thy tribulations, ... poverty, (but thou art rich).... [Oh, my! Now He's talking to the church now, the real church, not the others. They hated those deeds of the Nicolaitanes.] ... I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but they are the synagogue of Satan.

Now, they were complaining they were poverty-stricken. They had taken all they had. They had built up their little church like this. And being that they was such a little bitty group, they had pushed them out. The big church had just smothered them out.

And He said, "I know. I know you have to meet down on the corner. You meet in the alley, or anywhere else that you can. [And I've been in the catacombs where they'd have to meet—go down under the ground and meet, and things like....] I know your tribulations, and I know your troubles and so forth like that. But you're made rich through those tribulations."

Oh, my! Tell me ... any time that persecution comes upon the church, it strengthens it. Always it strengthens the church, in tribulations.

"I know your tribulations. But you're rich. Why? You've held onto Me. You're rich, but your tribulations ain't hurting you."

58 Now, did you notice? The Nicolaitanes had got themselves a synagogue now. The Bible said so here. Did you notice it here in the 9th verse? "...which are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." Uh-huh, the true church had been pushed out. The Nicolaitanes had taken over, and they had pushed out the people that had the Holy Ghost. So, therefore, they didn't have no use for them.

If Smyrna, in Asia, had only knew that the things ... that martyr's crowns would have waited them, they would have shook, see. Now, in other words, what ... when this prophecy was written and was sent down, and the church got ahold of it, and they seen they was the ones going to wear the martyr's crown, why, they'd ... why, it'd scared them to death. They was looking any time for it. Didn't come in their age.

Then, maybe some of them said, "Well, you know ... you know, I tell you, that prophet was wrong. John was wrong, because it didn't happen to us here in Smyrna." Why, it was to be hundreds of years later, see.

But when God speaks anything, it has to come to pass.

59 There's where we sink our faith, right there on God's Word. God keeps every promise. No matter you might think it has to happen right here, but maybe that's not God's time for it to happen. But, "My word will not return to me void, but it will accomplish that which it was purposed for." God will always honor His Word, and in His own good time it'll reap.