

THE SERVANT

Newsletter of the Christian Awareness Fellowship, Inc. Volume II Issue 96

What Was The Attraction On The Mountain?

by John Kennah

FORWARD

The God of the Bible is the omnipotent Creator working miracles and wonders in His universe. Scripture is filled with God's supernatural works, from the marvels of creation and the global flood, through the plagues in Egypt and the prophets of Israel, to the miracles of Jesus and the apostolic gifts, and the future signs and wonders that will accompany Christ's second advent, then finally, the new heavens and the new earth. God is constantly active in His world, glorifying Himself as He purposes.

But with the glory of signs and wonders come warnings. Jesus rebuked those who followed him for his miracles, and Scripture alerts us that even Satan appears as an angel of light, seeking to deceive humanity (II Cor. 11). There will even be those on the day of judgment will claim on that day they did miracles in Jesus name, but they shall be condemned (Mt. 7:22, 23).

Jesus said that those who would worship God must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth (John 4). In Ephesians we are exhorted to grow to maturity in the faith, speaking the truth in love, not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. We must be like the Bereans examining all things by the Word of God. We are commanded of God to study the Word that we may rightly understand it (II Tim. 2:15), and we are to declare the truth of God's Word to all. Even Jesus, himself, said we are to judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment (Jn7:24).

John Kennah has taken on the delicate but necessary task of examining some controversial teachings of a noted spiritual teacher, William M. Branham. And in this report he reveals the conflicting and false claims which have been propagated as a vision of God. May God be glorified as the truth is presented.

Duane L. Burgess, Tucson 1996

THE BIBLE says that there will be false teachers among us, exploiting the people with stories they have made up (II Peter 2). One controversial Bible teacher of this century was William Branham. He claimed to have had numerous visions, including one particularly powerful vision which he said was fulfilled by angelic visitation. But a careful study of the circumstances surrounding the vision reveals inconsistencies, conflicts, exaggeration, and fabrication. The vision is sadly false.

THE VISION: On December 22, 1962, William Branham claimed to have had a vision in which he saw himself and his seven year old son, Joseph, in the desert somewhere near Tucson, Arizona. He noticed a group

of tiny birds in a bush which soon flew away. Then he saw a flock of larger birds fly past him. As he looked to the west (still in the vision) he saw what he said were, "five of the mightiest angels I ever saw in my life," flying toward him. As they approached, he heard what sounded like a sonic boom in the distant south, and he thought that this might mean that he was going to be killed in an explosion. However he dismissed that notion when he saw that Joseph was not affected. Besides, there were five angels before him. A single angel would signify death, he reasoned, but five was the number of grace. He then understood that the angels were there to give him his "new commission." The vision suddenly ended, without an explanation of what his commission was.¹ (Attraction continued on page 2)

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HUNTING AT SUNSET MOUNTAIN: From March 6th through the 9th, 1963, Branham and two friends went hunting for javelina at a location northeast of Tucson, Arizona. He referred to the area as "Sunset Mountain." On March 8, the three men separated to search for game individually. While they hunted they were startled by a loud blast. When the three reunited, Branham immediately asked them if they had heard the blast. They said that they did, and then continued to hunt without further discussion of the incident.²

THE VISION INTERPRETED: After the hunting trip Branham returned to his church at Jeffersonville, Indiana, where he held a series of special meetings that he had announced almost two and a half months earlier, well before the hunting trip.³ The subject of the meetings was, "The Revelation of the Seven Seals," based on Revelation 5 through 8. From March 18th through the 24th, Branham devoted the seven evening services to his interpretation of each of the seven seals. He said that every day the Holy Spirit swept into his room to supernaturally open the seal that he was going to preach on that evening.⁴

On the last evening of the meetings, Branham told his followers that he finally knew what his vision of December 22nd, 1962 meant. He said that the two flocks of birds represented two consecutive stages of his ministry.⁵ By that time Branham had increased the number of angels in his vision from five to seven.⁶ He told his congregation that, while hunting at Sunset Mountain, after he heard the blast, the Holy Spirit told him to return to Jeffersonville to hold the meetings on the seven seals.⁷ Branham said that the seven angels from his vision represented his journey back to Jeffersonville, and the consequent revelation of the seven seals at the special meetings.⁸

DISCOVERY OF THE CLOUD: In May of 1963 a friend of Branham showed him a curious article in the May 17th issue of *LIFE* magazine.⁹ It reported that a large, ring-shaped cloud had appeared over Flagstaff, Arizona, and was so unusually high that it remained illuminated by the sun for one half-hour after sunset. At the

In our next publication...
Creation or Evolution?:
Choose Your Religion

time of the article, the origin of the cloud was still a mystery. The photograph of the cloud accompanying the article had been taken near Flagstaff.¹⁰

On June 1st, 1963, William Branham commented on the cloud to a small gathering of his followers. His explanation is somewhat vague, but he seemed to say that the photograph depicted the seven angels as they looked in his vision of December 22nd.¹¹ He pointed out that the appearance of the cloud coincided with the approximate dates of his hunting trip at Sunset Mountain. Then, on June 23rd, 1963, Branham's story further expanded when he said that the seven angels actually made a physical appearance to him at Sunset Mountain, and that the cloud formed as they approached.¹² Between then and December 4th, 1965, Branham stated on several occasions that the photograph in *LIFE* magazine was taken while he was on his hunting trip, and that his two friends also witnessed the appearance of the angels (though they did not).¹³

Then, in July, 1965, William Branham said that the Lord had just showed him that if he turned the picture of the cloud one quarter turn to the right, he would see that the cloud formed the outline of Jesus' head. He offered this as further vindication that his Message was the truth.¹⁴

DISCREPANCIES IN BRANHAM'S TESTIMONY: There are several significant problems with William Branham's explanation of the cloud. 1) The cloud featured in *LIFE* magazine was taken February 28th, 1963, eight days before Branham said that he met the angels while hunting. 2) The cloud pictured in *LIFE* magazine was located near Flagstaff, 200 miles northwest of Sunset Mountain. 3) Most importantly, the cloud was eventually revealed as resulting from the firing of a missile which exploded high over Vandenberg Air Force Base, California.¹⁵

It is clear that Branham's story of the cloud continually changed. From the time he claimed angels formed the cloud he began to credit them for other incidents which he had not credited to them before. Initially he said that after he heard the blast while hunting, the Holy Spirit told him to return to his church to preach on the seals. However, after the discovery of the cloud he said that the angels told him to do so.¹⁶ Also, Branham originally said that the Holy Spirit opened the seals to him each day of the meetings on the seals, but after the cloud he said that the angels took turns opening the seals to him day by day.¹⁶

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THE VISION AS FALSE PROPHECY: William Branham frequently told his followers that his vision was a prophecy from the Lord that foretold his experience at Sunset Mountain. But clearly, his vision of "The Cloud" is not true. Branham plainly stated he saw five angels in his vision; when the vision allegedly came to pass the number was changed to seven. Branham also said that, in his vision, his son Joseph was with him. On one occasion he even said that Joseph was with him when it came to pass.¹⁸ But Joseph stated in a letter that he was not at Sunset Mountain when the angels allegedly met with Branham.¹⁹ Neither were the two flocks of birds.

Finally, Branham said that the blast in his vision came from the distant south. But when it came to pass it was apparently centered at his location and, in his words, "almost... shook the mountains down."²⁰

Sadly, William Branham's vision reminds us of Deuteronomy 18:22, which says,

When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: Thou shalt not be afraid of him.

The facts of this matter clearly reveal the inconsistencies, contradictions, exaggeration and fabrication that William Branham has made. Only the Lord knows his heart. But Branham's vision and prophecy pertaining to "The Cloud" are false.

Our desire is that those who follow William Branham's teachings will discover that his word cannot be trusted and that the only "Message" of the hour is the Gospel of Jesus Christ as found in the Bible.

For more information, including three previously published articles, *The Message of William Branham*, write or call CAF.

*Am I therefore become
your enemy because I tell
you the Truth? Gal. 4:16*

NOTES

1. William Branham, "Reproach for the Word" *The Spoken Word (TSW)*, Spoken Word Publications (Jeffersonville, IN, sermon preached 12-23-62), 2:16, p. 4-7.
2. Rebekah Smith, "The Road to Sunset," *Only Believe* (Tucson, AZ, June, 1992), 5:1, pp. 6-7.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
4. Branham, *The Revelation of the Seven Seals* (Spoken Word Publications), pp. 122, 178, 231, 269, 279, 336, 411, 448, 557
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 565, 577
6. *Ibid.*
7. Branham, "Look," Voice of God Recordings (Jeffersonville, IN, sermon preached 4-28-63), tape #63-0428.
8. Branham, *The Revelation of the Seven Seals*, pp. 577-578.
9. Smith, "The Road to Sunset," p. 7.
10. "Odd Sights at Heights," *Life* (May 17, 1963), 54:20, p. 112.
11. Branham, "Come, Follow Me," Voice of God Recordings (sermon preached 6-1-63), tape #63-0601.
12. Branham, "Standing in the Gap," *TSW* (sermon preached 6-23-63), 6:7, pp. 20-21. After this date, he explained that the cloud was formed as the angels *flew away* (e.g., Branham, "The Rapture," *TSW* [sermon preached 12-4-65], 5:14, pp. 32-33).
13. Branham, "Testimony," *TSW* (sermon preached 11-28-63), 17:5, p. 6. A list of several other example references are available on request.
14. Branham, "What is the Attraction on the Mountain?" *TSW* (sermon preached 7-25-65) 8:8, p. 22. Later, he added that one can actually see features of Jesus' face in the cloud (Branham, "Trying to Do God a Service Without it Being God's Will," *TSW* [sermon preached 11-27-65], 7:2, pp. 13-14). However, no such features are evident in the original photograph.
15. Correspondence from the U.S. Dept. of the Air Force 1-26-96, and related materials on file at CAF.
16. Branham, "Testimony," p. 6. Also, "This Day This Scripture is Fulfilled," *TSW* (sermon preached 2-19-65) 3:8, p. 25.
17. Branham, "Standing in the Gap," p. 20.
18. Branham, "What is the Attraction on the Mountain?" p. 22.
19. Letter received from Joseph Branham, Jeffersonville, IN, April 30, 1996. On file.
20. Branham, *The Revelation of the Seven Seals*, p. 560.

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It's On My Heart

Praise God ! We have the mailing list up to date. Please, if you move and still want the SERVANT send us your correct mailing address and zip code.

A mother in Maine would like for us to pray for her son, Paul, who has left college and was baptized in a Mormon church. He's going on a two year mission. Also pray as we counsel a young lady that has left a witch's coven. Pray for the directors and staff of CAF also the elders of Calvary Chapel that oversee this ministry (Psalm 91, Ephesians 6:8-18).

Praise to God for the needs that have been met. Thanks to all the prayer partners of CAF and also for your financial support. If you are in need of prayer please call or write us. P. O. Box 35335, Tucson, AZ 85740-5335 (520) 741-8868. ~~Please pray for us as we pray for you.~~

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16

In Christ,
Chaplain Greene

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CAF Chaplain George Greene

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