

ENGLISH

The Spoken Word



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TWO CHURCHES IN
SEVEN CHURCH AGES

WILLIAM MARRION BRANHAM

"And thou shalt make a candlestick of PURE gold; of BEATEN work shall the candlestick be made; his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same."

The true church of Jesus Christ, the bride, is likened to PURE gold. Her righteousness is HIS righteousness. Her attributes are HIS own glorious attributes. Her identity is found in Him. What He is, she is to reflect. What He has, she is to manifest. There is no fault in her. She is all glorious within and without. From beginning to ending she is the work of her Lord, and all His works are perfect. In fact in her is summed up and manifested the eternal wisdom and purpose of God. How can one fathom it? How can one understand it? Though we cannot do that, we can accept it by faith, for God hath spoken it.

But not only is the candlestick of gold, it is of BEATEN gold. Hand-crafted of beaten gold, according to her blue prints which were Spirit-given. Outside of her Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, was ever a people so beaten and purged as the bride of Jesus Christ? Surely she is filling up the sufferings that Christ has left behind. Her goods are despoiled. Her life is in jeopardy. She is accounted as sheep for the slaughter. She is killed all the day long. She suffers much, but in it all retaliates not, neither does she cause others to suffer. Worthy of the Gospel is this lovely bride of Christ. And as gold is malleable, whereas brass will break with the beating, this gold of God will bear her suffering for the Lord, not bowed, not broken, not destroyed, but formed as a thing of beauty and a joy forever by the trials and testings of this life.

(Excerpt from *An Exposition Of The Seven Church Ages*, page 66-81)

Two Churches In Seven Church Ages

In order for you to fully understand the message of the Church Ages I would like to explain the various principles that allowed me to arrive at the names of the messengers, the length of the ages, and other factors involved therein.

Since this study was to be the most serious one I had ever undertaken up to this time, I sought God for many days for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Then only did I read the Scriptures on the Church Ages and delve into the many church histories written by the most unbiased historians that I could find. God did not fail to answer my prayer, for while I read the Word and the histories, I was enabled by the Holy Spirit to see unfolded a pattern that runs through the centuries and right into this present, last day.

The key given me of the Lord whereby I was able to determine the messenger for each age is a most Scriptural one. In fact it might be called the Keystone of the Bible. It is the revelation that God never changes, and that His ways are as unchangeable as He is. In Heb. 13:8 it says,

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."

Ecclesiastes 3:14-15, *"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before Him."*

"That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past."

Here it is: an unchanging God with unchanging ways. What He did at the FIRST He will have to keep on doing until it is done for the LAST time. There will never be a

change. Apply that to the Church Ages. The kind of man that God chose for the first age, and how God manifested in that man's ministry, would be the example for all other ages. What God did in the first church age is what He wants to do in all other ages.

Now we know exactly from the Word which was recorded by the Holy Spirit how the first, or original church, was founded and how God manifested Himself in her. The Word can't change or be changed because the Word is God. John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." To change one word of it, as did Eve, brings sin and death, even as it says in Revelation 22:18-19,

"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Thus, what the church was at Pentecost is the standard. That is the pattern. There is no other pattern. No matter what the scholars say, God has NOT changed that pattern. What God did at Pentecost He has to keep on doing until the church ages close.

Though scholars may tell you the apostolic age is over, don't you believe it. Such a statement is wrong on two counts. First of all, it is wrong to suppose there aren't any more apostles, just because the original twelve are dead. An apostle means a 'sent one'; and there are many sent ones today, but they are called missionaries. As long as men are

WITH YOU ALWAYS, even unto the end of the world (consummation of the ages)."

So there they are, full of the Holy Ghost and faith, on fire with the fire of God, holding forth the Word of truth, and there He stands to back them up. And think of it, not one believer of any age need cry in his heart, "Oh, that I might have been back there in the first age when the apostles were first sent out." There is NO need to look back. LOOK UP! Behold Him Who is even now walking in the midst of the churches through all ages. Behold Him Who is the same yesterday and today, and forever; and Who never changes either in essence or in His ways. Where two or three are gathered together in His Name, there He is in their midst! And not only in their midst as a complacent onlooker, or as a recording angel; but there He stands expressing exactly what He is--the Life and Sustainer and Giver of all good gifts to the church. Hallelujah!

"Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." How meaningful are those words when viewed in the light of the Scripture, which describes Him as "Christ Who is our Life". For Christ, indeed, is the life of the church. She has no other life. Without Him she is simply a religious society, a club, a meaningless gathering of the people. As a corpse bejeweled and dressed is still a corpse, so the church, no matter what her programs and her gracious efforts might achieve, without Christ she is a corpse also. But with Him in her midst, with Him motivating her, she becomes to the wonderment of all "His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." And this very hour He is walking in the midst of the last age's golden candlestick. What He was as He walked in the first age He is even now in this last age. Jesus Christ the SAME, YESTERDAY, and TODAY, and FOREVER.

"Seven golden candlesticks." In Exodus 25:31, it says,

There He is with the seven stars in His right hand. The right hand or arm signifies the power and authority of God.

Psalms 44:3, "For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them."

In that right hand of power are seven stars, who, according to Revelation 1:20, are the seven church messengers. This signifies that the very power and authority of God are behind His messengers to every age. They go forth in the fire and power of the Holy Ghost with the Word. They are stars because they reflect light. The light they reflect is His light. They have no light of their own. They kindle not their own fires that men may walk in the light of their sparks. Isaiah 50:11. It is night, for that is when the stars come out. It is the night of the blackness of sin, for all (even the whole world), have sinned and are constantly falling short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23.

These seven messengers are making God known to the people. He that receiveth them, receiveth Him That sent them. John 13:20. They speak and act upon His authority. He stands behind them with all the power of Godhead.

Matthew 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ALL POWER is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I AM

being called and sent forth with the Word of Life there is an apostolic age going on. Secondly, they refer to an age of 'manifested Holy Ghost power' as being over since the Bible has been completed. That is untrue. There is not even one Scripture that suggests that, but many conclusively state otherwise. Here is our proof that both of these charges are false.

Acts 2:38-39, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

The promise of power with which the apostles were endued at Pentecost is to "you (Jews), and to your children (Jews), and to all that are afar off (Gentiles), and to as many as the Lord our God shall call (both Jew and Gentile)". Until He stops calling, the Pentecostal message and power will NOT CEASE.

What the church had at Pentecost is her inalienable right. Originally, she had the pure Word of God. She had the power of the Spirit manifested in divers signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Hebrews 2:1-4, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."

For if the Word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience (to the Word) received a just recompense of reward;

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by

the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him;

God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?"

That original church was not organized by men. It was led by the Holy Ghost. It wasn't very big. It was hated and despised. It was oppressed. It was persecuted unto death. But it was true to God. It stayed with the original Word pattern.

Now don't get led astray here. When I said that God and His ways never change, I did not say that the church and its messengers could not change. The church isn't God. So she can change. But what I said was that because of the unchanging God with unchanging ways we can go back to the beginning and see the first and perfect act of God and then judge by that standard. That is how it is done. The True Church will always try to be like the original at Pentecost. The True Church of today will try to approximate that early first one. And the messengers to the churches, having the same Spirit of God in them, will try to approximate the apostle Paul. They won't be exactly like him; but the true messengers will be the ones that come the closest to Paul, who was free of all men, sold out to God, and gave forth the Word of God only, and manifested the Holy Ghost in power. None else would do. You have to work from the original. As like begets like, the True Church will always be the one that tries to follow in the steps of her founders at Pentecost and her messengers will follow the apostle Paul, the first messenger to the first church age. It is that simple, and that wonderful.

With this key, so simple, yet so wonderful, I was able, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to read the Book of Revelation

God Almighty, and beside Him there is no other. There He is, the Saviour ("*... salvation is of the Lord*", Jonah 2:9) walking in the midst of the churches throughout the seven ages. What He was in the first age He is in all ages. To every believer, He is Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, and today, and forever. What He did once He is still doing, and will keep on doing.

Now you will notice that Jesus is walking alone in the midst of His churches. There is no one else with Him. Neither indeed can there be, for He alone wrought her salvation, and having purchased her with His own blood He owns her. He is her Lord and Master. She gives Him all the glory and that glory He will not share with another. There is no pope with Him. There is no archbishop with Him. Mary, the mother of His earthly body, is not with Him. He does not speak and turn to a Father, for He is the Father. He does not turn to give orders to a Holy Spirit, for He is God, eternal Spirit, and it is His Life that is flowing and pulsating in the church giving her life, and without Him there would be no life. Salvation is of the Lord.

There was no one with Him when He trod the fierceness of the wrath of the fiery furnace. It was not another, but HIM Who hung upon the cross and gave His blood. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is the Alpha and Omega of our salvation. We are espoused to Him and not another. We don't belong to the church. We belong to Him. His Word is law. Creeds, dogmas, by-laws and constitutions have no effect on us. Yes, it is Jesus ALONE Who walks in the midst of the churches. It is God in her, willing and doing of His good pleasure. Never forget that. You have only one relationship to God and God has only one relationship to you--that is JESUS, and JESUS ALONE.

The order of temple service is also very revealing. There were, first of all, priests who were eunuchs. This sterile priesthood presaged the sterility of a people who would drift from the Word, for a people who claim to know God apart from the Word are as barren of life as is a sterile eunuch. Secondly, the temple had within its confines the virgin priestesses who performed the religious acts of the temple. This showed forth the day that ceremony and form, ritual and works, would take the place of the Holy Spirit and no longer would charismatic manifestation fill the temple of God. Over them all was the high priest, a man of political power and public influence, portraying what was already in progress, though not too manifested, that is, the church would soon be given over to the leadership of man with man's plans and man's ambitions and "thus saith the Holy Ghost" would no longer be a living reality. And underneath them all were the temple slaves who had no choice but obedience to the religious hierarchy. What can this mean but the day would come when the vested clergy, by political maneuvering, state help, and the substitution of Word and Spirit for creeds, dogmas, and human leadership, would enslave the laity while the leaders luxuriated in ill gotten wealth and enjoyed their filthy pleasures, and the poor people who were to be served according to God, now became the servants.

Jesus' Seven Messengers

Revelation 2:1, *"These things saith He That holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."*

This is He of Whom it is said, 'This Same Jesus is BOTH Lord and Christ.' There He is, the One and Only Lord

and the histories and find therein each age, each messenger, the duration of each age, and the part each played in the purpose of God from Pentecost to the consummation of those ages.

Since you now understand how we judge what the True Church was like (what she was at Pentecost and what she was in the apostolic age as set forth in the Word in the Book of Acts) we can apply the same rule to show us how the church failed. The basic error, or errors, that crept into the first church and were revealed in the Book of Acts and Revelation and also in the Epistles will become more and more visibly manifested in each subsequent age, until we come to a complete blackout of truth in the last, or Laodicean Age.

Now out of this first key that we have received of the Lord, there comes another and slightly less wonderful truth. I said that the True Church would always try to be like it was in the Book of Acts. That is exactly right. But we have discovered that the Word also teaches an invasion of error until there is a complete blackout of truth in the last day when the Lord is about to appear. The question now arises in our minds; does God forsake His own and let them fall into a state of complete deception? On no account, for the Scripture says very clearly in Matthew 24:24, that the 'Elect' CANNOT be deceived. "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, IF IT WERE POSSIBLE, they shall deceive the very elect." What then? The answer is clear before us. There is a True Church and a false church. There is a True Vine and a false vine. But of course that false church, false vine body, will always try to usurp the position of the True Church and contend that she, and not the Elect, are the real and authentic. The false will try to kill the True. That is how

it was in the Book of Acts, that is how it is set forth in the seven ages, and that is how it is declared in the various Epistles. That is how it has been. That is how it is now. That is how it will be. It can't change.

Now let us be very careful that we are not confused at this point. Thus we will seek the Word to validate this claim. Let us go back to the Book of the beginning, Genesis. In the Garden of Eden there were TWO trees. One was good; one was evil. One produced LIFE, the other produced Death. There were two children who originally offered sacrifices to God. Let me repeat that, they BOTH offered sacrifices to God.

Genesis 4:3-5, "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

But unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect."

But one (Cain) was evil, being of his father (that Wicked One), while Abel was righteous before the Lord. Again, there were two children from the flesh of the same parents. They were the twins of Isaac and Rebekah. One was the elect of God and the other was reprobate. Both worshipped God. In every single case there was worship of God involved. In every case the evil hated the righteous and persecuted the righteous. In some cases the evil destroyed the righteous. But notice. They were planted together. They lived together. They both made claims upon God and worshipped God.

These illustrations depict perfectly the parable of the Lord Jesus Christ when He said that the kingdom of heaven

depth of God", whereby they were aiming at the high calling of God, began to give way to a less watchful attitude. A less ardent following of Jesus Christ began to manifest itself as an omen that in the future ages the physical vehicle called the church would sink to the awfulness of the "depth of Satan". It had become relaxed and was drifting. Already the age was backsliding. It had left its first love. The tiny seed planted in that Ephesian Age would one day grow in the spirit of error until all foul birds of the air would roost in its branches. So inoffensive to human reasoning would that little plant appear to that New Eve (the New Church) that again she would be deceived by Satan. The Ephesian Age had presented to her the opportunity for God's best, and for awhile she prevailed, and then relaxed, and in that unguarded moment Satan planted the seed of complete ruination.

The very religion of Ephesus types out perfectly this first church age and sets the tenor of the ages to come. In the first place, the magnificent temple of Diana, that was so many years in building, housed in its sacred courts the most lusterless and unobtrusive, image of Diana that one could imagine. She was absolutely unlike any other of her images seated in the other temples dedicated to her. She was simply an almost shapeless female figure that finally sunk into the block of wood from which she was carved. And her two arms were formed of two simple bars of iron. How perfectly this depicts the spirit of antichrist loosed in the first age. There he was loosed in the midst of the people, and yet took no shape as to alarm the people. Yet the two arms of iron bars showed that it was his intent to crush the work of God as he made his inroads. And no one seemed to notice him or what he was doing. But one day they would notice, when with those arms of iron his 'deeds' became 'doctrine', and his doctrine became the law of an empire.

At the time of the giving of the Revelation, according to tradition, Paul had already died a martyr, but John was carrying on in his stead exactly as Paul had done in the days of his ministry. The death of Paul, before the Revelation was given, does not at all annul the fact that he was the messenger to the Ephesian Church Age, for the messenger to every age, regardless of when he appears or goes, is the one who influences that age for God by means of a Word-manifested ministry. Paul was that man.

City of Ephesus

The city of Ephesus was one of the three greatest cities of Asia. It was often called the third city of Christian faith, with Jerusalem first, and Antioch second. It was a very rich city. The government was Roman but the language was Greek. Historians believe that John, Mary, Peter, Andrew and Philip were all buried in this beautiful city. Paul, who founded the true faith in this city, pastored here only about three years; but when he was absent from the flock he was continually, prayerfully, mindful of them. Timothy was its first bishop.

I Timothy 1:1-3, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, Which is our hope;

Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."

The very name, Ephesus, has a strange compound meaning, "Aimed at", and "Relaxed". The high aspirations of this age that had begun with the fullness of the Spirit, "the

was like unto a man who sowed good seed, only to have an enemy come and plant tares amongst those good seeds. God did not plant the tares. Satan planted those tares right amongst the good seed of God. Those two kinds of plants (people), from two different seeds, grew up together. They partook of the nourishment in the same earth, they shared in the same sun, rain, and all other benefits, and both were harvested in their turn. Do you see it? Don't ever forget these truths as we study the church ages and later the seals. And above all, don't forget that it is in this last age, when the tares are getting bound for their burning, that they will shove out the wheat that is to be garnered by the Lord.

I want to carry this thought all the way through, so let us go a step further. Have you ever studied the history of revivals? Now a revival signifies a move of God in power. And every time God moves, Satan is there to move also. It never fails. In the days of the great Welsh revival (and most people don't know this), the insane asylums filled up quickly, and there was a great display of devil power to take away the attention from God. It is written that in Wesley's day the people would do most peculiar things that were definitely of Satan to try to mock the goodness and power of God. In Luther's day it is said that the miracle of his ministry did not lie in the fact that he successfully protested the Roman Catholic Church, but the miracle lay in the fact he could, and did, stay sound and sane amidst the fanatics who were often filled with, and guided by, wrong spirits. And if you have been aware of this last day ministry, you will have noted the same invasion of false and wicked spirits. It has to be that way. Now I hope and trust you are spiritual minded enough to get that, and capitalize on it.

Just to seal this point on the True and false vines mingling and demonstrating the two spirits that are at work, let us look into I John 4:1-4, and Jude 3, 4, 12.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and EVEN NOW ALREADY is it in the world.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: (antichrist spirit) because greater is He, (God's Spirit) that is in you than he that is in the world."

Jude 3, 4, 12. *"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the SAINTS.*

For there are CERTAIN MEN (not Saints) crept in unawares (these have not come into the fold by means of the DOOR and are therefore robbers), who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, UNGODLY men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 28:7-9, *"In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.*

And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed."

II Corinthians 12:12, *"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."*

Thirdly, he had the evident fruit of his God-given ministry.

II Corinthians 12:11, *"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing."*

I Corinthians 9:2, *"If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostle-ship are ye in the Lord."*

II Corinthians 11:2, *"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."*

Paul had been the means of bringing in multitudes of the Gentile sheep; he fed them, and cared for them, until they brought forth righteous fruit and were prepared to meet the Lord as a part of the Gentile bride.

or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Acts 14:8-10, "And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked."

Acts 20:9-12, "And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted."

These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast WITH you, feeding themselves without fear..."

It cannot be denied in the face of these Scriptures that the True Church and the false church are intertwined, having been planted together but of different seeds.

Now then, I think there is something else you ought to know. The seven churches which are addressed by John are in Asia Minor and are all Gentile churches. He does not speak to the church at Jerusalem which was mostly Jewish with perhaps just a few Gentiles in it. The reason is that God had turned from the Jews to the Gentiles. Thus the whole of the church ages is God dealing with the Gentiles, and calling out a Gentile Bride to Himself. That makes the 'Church Ages' and 'The Fulness of the Gentiles' the one and the same thing.

Acts 13:44-48, "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God.

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

Romans 11:1-8, "I say then, Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down Thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (

According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day."

Romans 11:25-29, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that

Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

I Corinthians 14:36-37, "What? came the Word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

Notice that Paul was unorganized, but Spirit-led, as when God moved upon Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt. Jerusalem's council never sent Paul out, nor did it have any power or jurisdiction over him. God, and God alone, did the sending and the leading. Paul was not of men, but of God. Galatians 1:1, "*Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead:)*"

Galatians 2:3-5, "But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you."

Secondly, his ministry was in the power of the Spirit, thereby demonstrating the spoken and written Word.

I Corinthians 2:1-5, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech

And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."

Romans 11:13, *"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office."*

Paul founded the church at Ephesus about the middle of the first century. This enables us to set the date of the beginning of the Ephesian Church Age; about 53 A.D.

His manner of ministering set the pattern that all future messengers were to aspire to, and actually sets the pattern for every true minister of God, though he would not attain to such heights in the prophetic realm as did Paul. Paul's ministry had a threefold quality and was as follows:

First of all, Paul was absolutely true to the Word. He never deviated from it no matter what the cost.

Galatians 1:8-9, *"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."*

As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Galatians 2:11,14, *"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."*

"But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the

blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the Fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

For this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

As concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

These seven churches located in Asia Minor contained certain characteristics within them, at that ancient date, which became the mature fruit of later ages. What were just seed plants back there came out later in a mature harvest, even as Jesus said, "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Luke 23:31.

Message To The Ephesian Church Age

Revelation 2:1-7, *"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith He That holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;*

I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

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

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

Messenger Paul

The messenger (angel) to the church of Ephesus was the apostle Paul. That he was the messenger to the first age of the Gentile era cannot be denied. Though to Peter was granted the authority to open the doors to the Gentiles, it was given to Paul to be their apostle and prophet. He was the Prophet-Messenger to the Gentiles. His prophetic office, by which he received the full revelation of the Word for the Gentiles, authenticated him as their apostolic messenger. To this agreed the other apostles at Jerusalem.

Galatians 1:12-19, "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more

exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

But when it pleased God, Who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace,

To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."

Galatians 2:2, "And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain."

Galatians 2:6-9, "But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

But contrariwise, when they saw that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter:

(For He That wrought effectually in Peter to the apostle-ship of the circumcision, the Same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)