

ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

Only Believe



ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

JUST BEYOND THIS LAST BREATH

by William Branham

The other morning I was lying on my bed, and I wondered what I would be like in that theophany, or celestial body. Would it be that I would see my precious friends, or would I see a little white fog going by and say, "There goes Brother Neville?" Could he say, "Hello, Brother Branham?" I often thought about that I raised up on my pillow and put my head against the headboard of the bed, and I heard a voice say, "Would you like to see just beyond the curtain?"

I said, "It would help me so much." I looked, and in just a moment - one breath - I had come into what looked like a great big grassy field. I looked back and there I was, lying on the bed. I said, "This is a strange thing."

I looked this way and that, and people were coming by the thousands, running, screaming, "Oh, our precious brother." Young women, maybe in their early twenties, they were throwing their arms around me and screaming, "Our precious brother." Then came young men in the brilliance of young manhood. Their eyes glistening, looking like stars on a darkened night, their teeth as white as pearl, and they were screaming and grabbing me saying, "Oh our precious brother."

I stopped and looked at my hands, and I was young! I looked back at my old body lying there on the bed with my hands behind my head, and I said, "I don't understand this."

And then that voice that was speaking up above me said, "You know it is written in the Bible that the prophets were gathered with their people."

I said, "Yes, I remember that in the Scriptures."

He said, "This is when you will gather with your people."

I said, "Then they will be real, and I can feel them?"

"Oh yes," he said.

I said, "But there are millions, and there aren't that many Branhams."

And that voice said, "They're not Branhams. They're your converts, the ones you have led to the Lord. Some of these women that are so beautiful were better than ninety years old when you led them to the Lord. No wonder they are screaming 'My precious brother.'"

I said, "Where is Jesus? I want to see Him so bad."

"Now, He is just a little higher, right up that way. You were sent for a leader, and some day God will come and He will judge you according to your teaching."

I said, "Does every leader have to be judged like that?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "What about Paul?"

He said, "He'll have to be judged with his."

"Well," I said, "if his group goes in, so will mine, because I've preached exactly the same Word."

And millions screamed out, all at once, saying, "*We're resting on that!*"

All fear of death is gone. It would be a pleasure to be taken from this corruption and disgrace. I wish there was some way I could explain it to you, but just beyond this last breath is the most glorious thing. One visit there has made me a different man. I can never, never, never be the same Brother Branham that I was.

William Marrion Branham

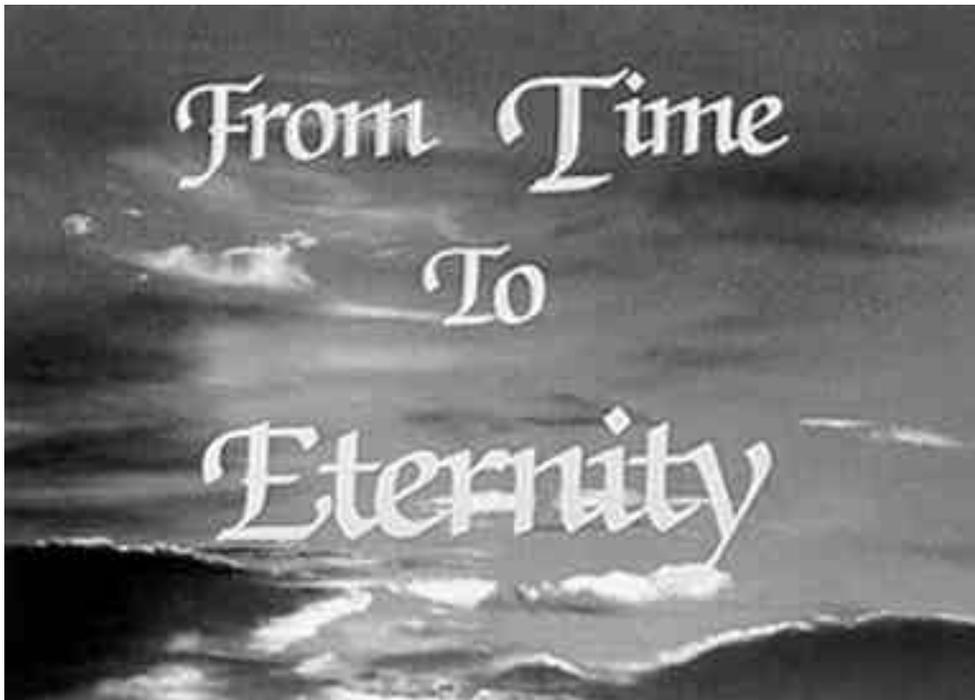
April 6, 1909 December 24, 1965



“In order to proclaim the doctrine of the Scripture, to inject this, make it real again and show the people the hour we’re living in, God sends His prophet to manifest present tense.”

Taken from Instructions To Lee Vayle Concerning The Church Age Book; A tape letter from William Branham; 1965

THE PASSING OF A PROPHET



The distance to Jeffersonville, Indiana, from Tucson, Arizona, is one thousand, seven hundred and fifty miles. It takes two and one-half days to make the journey by car, along what is known as the northern route - up through New Mexico, and straight across the Texas Panhandle, Oklahoma, Missouri, and the southern point of Illinois, into the Ohio Valley region of Southern Indiana.

For the Branham family, the road was thoroughly familiar. Since moving to Tucson almost exactly three years before, they had returned several times to their Jeffersonville home, especially during summer vacations and school holidays. During this visit, Brother Branham planned to preach at least two services.

A few days before their scheduled departure from Tucson, Brother Branham asked Billy Paul to contact Banks Wood, a trustee at the Tabernacle in Jeffersonville, to have him make arrangements for the rental of the Parkview Junior High School auditorium for the meeting. He said that one of the subjects he wanted to speak on was *The Trail Of The Serpent*.

Tucson had been rainy for several days, and bad weather was being predicted for parts of New Mexico and Texas. The evening before leaving,

Brother Branham and Billy Paul decided that they would wear hunting clothes (Levi jeans and jackets) during the trip, something they ordinarily would not do when traveling with the family.

Brother Branham liked to start early, and by six o'clock on the morning of December 18, 1965, the two car caravan had already passed the Tucson city limits,

heading east on Interstate 10. Leading the way in a bright red 1965 Chevrolet was Billy Paul, his wife, Loyce, and their oldest son, four-year-old Paul. The baby, thirteen-month-old David, had stayed in Tucson with his baby sitter, Betty Collins.

Following closely behind was Brother Branham, Sister Branham, Sarah, and Joseph, in a light tan Ford station wagon. The car was a 1964 model and had nearly fifty-five thousand miles on the odometer, but it looked like new. Brother Branham was very particular about his cars, and he kept them spotlessly clean and in perfect running order. He normally traded every two years, and the new 1966 wagon that he had ordered was now ready to be picked up in Jeffersonville.

In the back seat, fourteen-year-old Sarah carefully inserted the two prongs of a retainer into the proper grooves on the new braces that covered her teeth, and then fastened the strap around her head that held the uncomfortable apparatus in place. She wore the retainer at night, and occasionally during the day, even though it made speaking difficult. But she remembered that the orthodontist had told her that the more frequently she wore it, the sooner she could get the braces removed, and she smiled as she snuggled down on her half of the seat to catch a few more winks of sleep before the breakfast stop.

At the other end of the back seat sat ten-year-old Joseph. He wasn't sleepy and had no intention of lying down, but he checked to make sure that Sarah hadn't crossed that invisible barrier down the middle of the seat that separated *yours* from *mine*.

It wasn't often that he was able to claim an entire half-seat as his own, and he planned to enjoy it.

Normally, the car would have had one more passenger, but nineteen-year-old Rebekah remained in Tucson, even though it would be her first time to be away from the family at Christmas. But she had two reasons for staying behind, the principal one being that her fiancé, George, would be in Tucson for a two-week leave from the Army.

The second incentive for staying had been a suggestion by Brother Branham that she and her friend Betty, who was baby sitting little David, use the time while the remainder of the family was in Jeffersonville to move all the clothes and household items from the small apartment on Park Avenue to their new house in the foothills. The furniture for the new home, which Brother Branham and Rebekah had chosen during a special buying trip to Phoenix on December 10, was scheduled to be delivered before Christmas. It sounded like the perfect plan: When the family returned to Tucson on New Year's Day, it would be their first day at the new address. Everything would be ready and in place.

Meanwhile, inside the station wagon, the wrapped gifts which the family would exchange on Christmas day had been carefully placed on top of the suitcases to avoid being crushed. The largest boxes were the presents which Brother and Sister Branham had purchased for one another: A new chocolate-colored brown suit from JC Penney's for him, and a colorful, quilted robe for her. Brother Branham's tan leather briefcase containing his Bible and the sermon notes for the message he planned to preach in Jeffersonville was wedged securely against the back seat.

When the travelers came out of the restaurant after breakfast in the small desert town of Benson, Arizona, the morning sun was hidden by low-hanging clouds. Paul was overjoyed that he was being allowed to ride in his Grandpa's station wagon with Joseph for a few hours, and he spent the entire morning going back and forth from the front seat, between Grandpa and Grandma, to the back seat, between Sarah and Joseph. After lunch in Alamogordo, New Mexico, when Billy Paul directed Paul into his own car for an afternoon nap, Brother Branham interceded saying, "That's okay. Let him ride with me."

It was just after six o'clock in the evening when the family stopped at Denny's restaurant in Clovis, New Mexico, for supper. They had already traveled over five hundred miles that day, and would try to

reach Amarillo, Texas, nearly one hundred miles further down the road, before stopping for the night. The weather had turned cold, and the radio said a light snow was already falling in Amarillo.

After the meal, which, for Brother Branham, consisted solely of a piece of lemon pie, Billy and his father spoke together briefly concerning the distance yet to be traveled. As the group made their way back towards the two automobiles, Joseph turned to go with Billy Paul, then hesitated and looked towards his father.

Rarely had he been allowed to ride in Billy's car in the past, but today Paul had already altered the travel routine they generally followed, which was *stay in your own car*. "Can I ride with Paul now?" he asked.

Brother Branham looked at Billy to see his reaction, then replied, "Sure, you can ride with him for a while."

It was seven o'clock when they pulled out of the restaurant's parking lot. Once again, Billy Paul's car was leading the way as they headed out of town. The two boys talked quietly in the back seat. In the station wagon that was following closely behind, Sarah stretched out along the entire back seat and was soon asleep. The retainer, which she had dutifully worn all day, lay forgotten in its holder.

Eight miles down the road, just outside Texico, a city that straddles the line dividing New Mexico and Texas, was a particularly difficult intersection, where the road turned north and joined highway 60, the road to Amarillo. Billy Paul made the turn around the traffic island smoothly. After all, he and his father had traveled this way many times, and both knew the route well. But as he glanced in his rear view mirror, he was surprised to see that Brother Branham, just a few car lengths behind, had missed the turn entirely and was now heading out of the city in a southerly direction. Quickly, Billy Paul pulled to the side of the road to wait, knowing that within moments the mistake would be discovered and corrected. But nearly five minutes passed before Brother Branham made his way back to where Billy Paul was waiting, and they were able to continue.

It was seven twenty-five, and the sliver of moon that was visible overhead did little to relieve the blackness of the night. The two-lane stretch of highway between Bovina and Friona, Texas, was flat and straight, with wide shoulders on either side of the blacktop. The speed limit was sixty-five miles per hour, precisely the speed Billy Paul was traveling as he passed the car in front of him, and then quickly returned to the right lane. Moments later, coming towards him, he saw what he thought to be the single

headlight of a motorcycle, weaving back and forth down the center of the highway. Within seconds the vehicle was near enough that he could see it was not a motorcycle, but a car with a missing headlight on the driver's side. More than half of the vehicle was in his lane, and coming straight towards him. He jerked the wheel violently to the right, causing his car to go completely off the road and into the dirt beyond the shoulder. In the split second it took him to regain control and return his car to the road, the out-of-control vehicle that he had barely avoided, virtually exploded into the front of the car just behind him.

In his rear-view mirror, Billy Paul witnessed the moment of impact. The sound of the crash ripped through

the cold night air of the Texas prairie like the thunder of war, wrapping itself around him and sealing the echoes of its roar into his mind forever.

Loyce began to scream, "It's your daddy's car! It's your daddy's car!"

He hit the brake pedal and spun his car into a sharp U-turn, heading back towards the collision site. "The car I just passed was between me and Dad!" It was a frantic response that was both a question and a desperate supplication. As the beam of his headlights pierced the dust and debris-filled air, large pieces of wreckage, still spinning from the force of the impact, came into view. Scars in the asphalt and a dark oily streak led towards the ditch to his left, so he aimed the car in that direction.

Billy Paul Branham

Dad and I traveled many miles together, and we saw lots of things, lots of accidents. I had seen people die.

When my headlights hit Dad's car and I could see him, I knew he was gone, because his eyes were open, and his face looked swollen. It was a sight that I had seen before.

He was so caught in the car to where he couldn't move. His left arm was in the door, and the metal was just jammed in on it. His left leg was wrapped around the column of the steering wheel. Most of his body, his head and shoulders, were projected through the windshield, lying on the hood.

I need to add in here just a little something that had taken place a few weeks before, when Brother Gene Norman, Brother Don Werts, Brother Brewer, and myself went hunting with Brother Branham in Northern Arizona. I became ill one night (I have a nervous condition), and I left the campsite and walked up into the hills, crying because I was feeling so badly, and I lost my supper. A while later, still sick, I came back into camp. I saw Daddy take off his hat and bow his head, as he stood there by the fire, and in just a few minutes, all my sickness was gone.

He had been unable to eat his

supper, and a bit later I asked him if I could fix him some soup or something. He said, "No," and he took off, walking down the road. When he came back a short time later, I could see that there had been tears in his eyes. He walked back to the fire, and I stepped over to him and said, "Dad, are you feeling all right?"

He said, "It is okay." Just before we went to bed that night, he said something that I could not remember ever hearing him say before. He spoke to the brothers and said, "Did you see Billy go up into the hills a while ago?"

They all said, "Yes."

He said, "You see, that is the reason Billy likes to always be with me. He knows that if I will just pray for him, it will be all right"

"Brother Norman," he continued, "do you remember a few weeks ago when you fell off that fence while we were hunting, and you tore up your ankle? You didn't think that you would be able to walk on it for many, many days. I just laid my hand over on you, prayed for you, and in a couple of days you were back to work." Brother Norman acknowledged this to be true.

Dad said, "I was hunting several months ago, and I just made a little wrong step and

sprained my ankle." Then he started unloosening his boots and he said, "Look at this." His entire ankle was still black and blue.

He said, "Billy was so nervous that he didn't think that he could make it, but you are okay now, aren't you Paul?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "It is just that little touch. Yet, I have prayed for this ankle, and it is still the same. I have prayed for my nervous condition, and it is still here. The gift is not for me. It was sent for you.

I'll admit that it was just words to me then, but the night of the accident, he looked at me and said, "Can you get me out?"

I tried, I really tried. "No, I can't," I told him. I had his head in my hands, and I said, "Dad, look at me." He opened his eyes. "You speak the Word, Dad, and you will come out of there."

He turned his head to the right. He never spoke a word, but just turned his head from me, and then I knew what he meant when he said it wasn't for him, it was for us.

Taken from: *A Personal Testimony by Billy Paul Branham*; Phoenix, Arizona: January 26, 1966.



Within the boundaries of the light was a picture of total devastation. The tan station wagon lay at an angle to the road, facing east and still upright, but the driver's side of the vehicle had been transformed into an eruption of mangled steel and wires. There were no seat belts or passenger restraints, that, if present, would have given some degree of protection to the occupants of the vehicle. Of the three passengers, only Brother Branham was visible, his lower body trapped between the crushed door and the steering column, and his head and shoulders projecting through the shattered windshield. The harsh glare of the headlights highlighted his face, which was turned outward. When he saw his father, Billy Paul exhaled his pent-up breath in a choking cry, "He is dead!"

By the time the car came to a complete stop at the side of the road, Loyce had opened her door and was running towards the wrecked station wagon. Instinctively, Billy Paul instructed the boys to stay in the car and lock the doors, then, sick with dread, he raced to Brother Branham's side.

Before he could reach him, Billy Paul saw Brother Branham's head drop forward, and a second later he was able to stretch his arms across the twisted framework of the car to cradle his father's face in his two hands. From the parked Chevrolet came a child's terror-filled scream as Joseph's young mind began to assimilate the frightening, violent scene before him. Unexpectedly, Brother Branham spoke, "Who was that?"

In a shaking voice, Billy Paul replied, "That was Joseph, Daddy."

After a moment's hesitation, Brother Branham responded with, "Tell Joseph everything is okay."

The car with the single headlight was a 1959 Chevrolet, driven by a seventeen-year-old farm laborer named Santiago Luis Ramos. Less than thirty days before, Ramos had been released from a state reformatory, and only three days prior to the accident he had purchased the automobile, making a down payment of \$100. He and the three friends riding with him had been drinking alcohol, and they had alcohol in the car with them at the time of the crash. Now, Ramos' body lay face-down in the middle of the road. He was dead, and his three companions were seriously injured.

The driver of the car traveling just behind Brother Branham, a Mr. Busby, was attempting to aid the passengers of the Ramos vehicle. Several other passers-by stopped, and others called out that they were going for help. Friona, the nearest city, was six miles further east.

From the floorboard behind the front seat, Billy Paul heard Sarah as she began to groan under the luggage that had been hurled forward. On the other side of the station wagon, Loyce called out, "Billy, your mother is dead." He hurried around to where Sister Branham lay in darkness on the floorboard under the dash, pressed

between the seat and the car heater. Desperate moments ticked by as he searched for a pulse in her neck and then at her wrist, but to no avail.

Rushing back around to the other side of the car and bending down as closely as he could over his father, Billy Paul whispered, "Dad, I know that you are hurt really bad, but I don't know how to get you out without hurting you even worse. I have to wait until help arrives. I can hear Sarah, and I think she will be okay. But Dad, I think Mom is dead."

Brother Branham lifted his head slightly and asked, "Where is she?"

"She is over to your right," Billy Paul replied.

His left arm was tangled in the wreckage of the car door, and even the slightest movement must have multiplied a hundred-fold the fiery agony he was suffering, but somehow he stretched out far enough with his right hand that he was able to touch his wife. In a soft voice he prayed, "Lord, don't let Mommy die. Be with us at this hour."

Within moments, Sister Branham began to move, and then Billy Paul heard her moan. He asked whether or not he should now try to get his mother out of the car. "No, just leave her," his father instructed, "and leave Sarah also."



Highway 60 wreck - These two automobiles were involved in a head-on collision on Saturday night six miles west of Friona. The driver of the Chevrolet, top, was killed. Three passengers in that car and three members of an Arizona family who were riding in the station wagon were critically injured.

The sustained wail of an ambulance siren could be heard, pressing its way through the darkness.

Sister Branham and Sarah were the first to be taken to the hospital, while highway patrolmen and other emergency service operators that had arrived on the scene worked with Billy Paul to remove Brother Branham from the wreckage. The ambulance made a second, and then a third trip from the crash site to the hospital in Friona with the dead and injured from the Ramos vehicle. Forty-five minutes had passed, and still all efforts to free Brother Branham had been futile. Every means at their disposal had been used to try and remove the driver's door, but without success. Rescue workers knew that immediate action needed to be taken if there was to be any hope of survival.

From the line of traffic, which extended six miles in each direction from the wrecked vehicles, a man driving a four-wheel-drive truck, equipped with a logging chain for heavy pulling, offered his vehicle for the rescue operation. In a desperate and dangerous move, a wrecker secured its chain to the rear bumper of the station wagon, and the logging chain on the volunteered truck was attached to the brace that extended from the roof to the hood of the car, on the driver's side. On Billy Paul's signal, the car was pulled simultaneously from both directions, causing the broken front end to give slightly. In the fractional space that was created, he was able to crawl over his father's shoulder and reach under the dash to untangle the left leg that was wrapped around the steering column. Brother Branham was free at last from the steel trap that had held him. "Catch me Paul," he said, as he fell into his son's arms and was pulled from the car.

It took the ambulance only five minutes to deliver the last and most seriously injured patient to the emergency room of the small hospital in Friona. Billy Paul was allowed to ride next to his father for the short trip. Fully conscious, but in a voice that was growing sluggish, Brother Branham questioned, "Do I have on my hairpiece?"

In the months preceding the accident, Brother Branham had donned the small toupee with increasing frequency, but in the back of the speeding ambulance his inquiry sounded alarmingly irrational. Even more surprising was his reaction to Billy Paul's affirmative answer. "Take it off," he directed.

Tenderly, Billy Paul put a shaking hand on his father's head and tugged several times at the well-stuck hairpiece, not enough to hurt, but enough that it could be felt. "It's on too tight, Dad. We can get it off later."

"Take it off" This time it was not a polite request.

Squinting against the semi-darkness of their surroundings, Billy Paul tried in vain to see his father's eyes, knowing well the piercing look that accompanied that authoritative voice. Without hesitation, he pulled the wig from the prophet's head.

Sister Branham and Sarah had already been taken downstairs for x-rays when the last ambulance arrived at the hospital. Loyce and the children were in the waiting room, being cared for by a local family who had witnessed the accident and then stayed nearby to offer what comfort they could. Even after his father was taken into a room for examination, Billy Paul could not allow himself to succumb to the debility which he felt. He found a phone booth and made a call to his home in Tucson, where his sister Rebekah was staying with her friend, Betty.

The medical staff on duty that night was not able to offer any words of encouragement regarding Brother Branham's condition. Realizing they were ill-equipped to handle such serious injuries, as soon as his x-rays were completed, they prepared to have him transferred as quickly as possible to the Northwest Texas Hospital in Amarillo, seventy miles away. But, contrary to their plans, several hours would pass before the transfer could be made.

A dangerous reduction of blood flow throughout the body tissues produces a condition that is known as shock. Unless the victim receives an immediate infusion of blood, the prognosis is coma and death. Billy Paul had just hung up the telephone when one of the doctors on duty called him over to one side. "Son, we don't give your daddy much of a chance. He maybe going into shock and we don't have enough blood on hand to help him much. I need to know your blood type."

Although at first it seemed likely that Billy Paul was an acceptable blood donor under these desperate circumstances, the cross-matching which was quickly performed as a precautionary measure revealed that although they shared the same blood type, Billy Paul's blood contained Rh-factors that made it incompatible with his father's. The local sheriff, who also had the same blood type, was cross-matched at the same time, and thankfully he was declared to be a compatible donor.

By the time the first pint of blood had been prepared, Brother Branham's blood pressure was so extremely low that in order to even receive the transfusion, he was first placed on a bed that had been adjusted to where he was nearly standing on his head. Over the next eight hours, they were able to give him three pints of blood.

Rebekah Smith

George and I had been invited to the home of Pearry and Janice Green for the evening of the 18th, and when he came to Billy Paul's house to pick me up (Betty and I were staying there while the family was away), it was already dusk. This worried me because neither one of us had been to the Greens' home, a very remote ranch house on Tucson's far east side, and I was afraid that we wouldn't be able to find the place in the dark. One hour later we were stopping for the third time to ask directions, and I was in tears. George reassured me, "I know we're almost there," but I just wanted to go home. It really didn't have anything to do with not being able to find the Greens' house, I just wanted to be home, on Park Avenue, and I didn't know why. It was seven-thirty when we finally found the turn-off we'd been looking for, and I dried my eyes and decided I was being silly.

We stayed until just after nine o'clock, and approximately forty-five minutes later we were back at Billy Paul's house on Edison Street. Betty came to the door as soon as she heard us pull up, and she called out, "There's been an accident! Billy Paul

will be calling back in a few minutes!"

Billy had called just as George and I were leaving the Greens', and Betty had been pacing the floor ever since, waiting for me to get home. Then we paced together, because until Billy Paul called back, all we could do was pray and wait.

I just couldn't believe that the accident was serious. I told myself that maybe Billy Paul just wanted to tell me to hurry up and move our things into the new house because they had decided to come back to Tucson instead of going on to Jeffersonville. Dad was very particular about his automobiles, and I knew if he'd had even a minor fender-bender, he would want to have it repaired immediately.

I went into the bedroom to wait for Billy's call, which came just a few minutes later. I can remember, but I can't describe how he sounded. He didn't give me many details of the accident, just that Dad, Mom, and Sarah were hurt, and it was serious. "Get the first flight out in the morning for Amarillo," he told me.

Maybe it was a form of denial that



caused me to ask him, "Wouldn't it be better if I just stay here and make things ready for when they get home?" I wanted so badly to hear that they would be well enough to come home in a few days!

"Sis, listen to me," he said. "I can't tell you over the phone just how

bad things are just now, but you need to be here.

"Don't come on a small plane, I know how Dad feels about small planes and he wouldn't want you to be on one, but get on the first commercial flight available. We will be at the Northwest Texas hospital. And Sis, pray harder than you've ever prayed before in your life."

Already certain of the answer, I had to ask him one more question before I hung up. "What time did it happen?"

"Seven twenty-five," he told me.

The telephone rang throughout the night. No one wanted to believe what they'd heard. The next morning when George and I boarded the American Airlines flight, there were several familiar faces in the crowd.

When the doctors realized that it would be some time before Brother Branham's condition could be stabilized sufficiently to allow him to be moved to the Amarillo hospital, they quickly decided to send Sister Branham and Sarah on ahead. They had given both patients what preliminary care they had to offer, but they too were in need of the emergency treatment that was only available at the larger facility. Both the mother and the daughter were unconscious, and examinations revealed a concussion, lacerations, and broken bones. Their x-rays were placed in an envelope at the end of each stretcher, then the patients were covered with an extra blanket and wheeled into the waiting ambulance.

Billy Paul was now alone in the hospital waiting room. It was quiet, except for the sound of his own heart beating against his ears. He knew that by now many people were on their knees in prayer for the Branham family, and it was a great consolation. Loyce

and the two children had accepted an invitation from a charitable family and had gone home with them for a few hours of rest. The doctors came in to report that Brother Branham's blood pressure was up slightly, and shortly he would be ready for the trip to Amarillo, where the hospital staff had been alerted and were prepared and waiting for his arrival. Billy Paul, who had not slept in over 24 hours, was offered a seat in the back of the ambulance with his father and a nurse. He accepted gratefully. It was six o'clock in the morning, Sunday, December 19.

Upon arriving at Northwest Texas Hospital, Sister Branham had been taken to the Intensive Care Unit. She was diagnosed as having a severe concussion, lacerations on her head and body a shattered bone in her left leg, and a deep puncture wound, also in her left leg. Her face was swollen beyond recognition, and she remained unconscious.

Sarah was semi-conscious, and was placed in a private room on the second floor. Already several orthopedic specialists had closely examined the x-rays that had been taken in Friona and were tentatively encouraged by what they saw. Although there were fractures in seven of the vertebrae of her back, the spinal cord did not appear to be damaged, and she did have feeling in her legs and arms. For the present, all they could do was immobilize her head and spine, and prescribe heavy dosages of drugs. Once she completely regained consciousness, the pain would be unbearable. Her road to recovery would be a long one.

Sarah was also suffering from a second injury that needed specialized attention, her mouth. Thrown violently forward at the moment of the crash, her face had pressed so forcefully into the rear of the front seat that her braces were now imbedded in the flesh of her lips. An orthodontist had been called to the hospital for the tedious job of cutting the wiring from the braces so that her mouth could be treated. Without the braces, she would undoubtedly have lost most, or even all, of her teeth. Conversely, had the retainer (which she had negligently left off) been in place, and its sharp prongs been driven into her mouth, the results could have been deadly.

At seven-thirty, the ambulance carrying Brother Branham arrived at the hospital and he was taken immediately into surgery. After checking on his mother and sister, Billy Paul found a phone booth and began calling friends and relatives with an update of everyone's condition. Totally exhausted, he was hardly aware when Brother Peary Green from Tucson, Arizona, walked into the room thirty minutes later and put his arm across his shoulder. "Brother Billy, you've done enough," he said, and he took the phone from Billy Paul's hand.

The large waiting room adjoining the Intensive Care Unit where Brother and Sister Branham were being cared for, filled quickly as friends and family members began arriving from across the United States. By mid-afternoon, there were thirty anxious faces waiting to question the one visitor that the hospital allowed each hour into the ICU to see the prophet and his wife.

Rebekah and her fiancé, George Smith, arrived at the hospital at three in the afternoon. There were still thirty minutes remaining until the next visitor would officially be permitted into the ICU, but the nurses thoughtfully made an exception and permitted her to see her parents.

There were twelve patients being cared for in the large open room that was the Intensive Care Unit, every bed was filled. The nurse's station was located just to the right of the door, and straight ahead was a row of six beds, separated from one another only by a white curtain. Brother Branham's bed was the one nearest the nurse's station.

His left arm and leg were being held in traction, but no casts had been applied. The bones of his arm were broken in so many places that doctors did not yet know if they could ever be re-aligned properly. His head was very swollen, and his eyes were open but not focused (a symptom of the head injury). A tracheotomy had been performed, which made every breath sound like a struggle. He no longer responded to external stimuli, and the doctors felt that he was now in a deep coma.

Sister Branham occupied the third bed to the left, and she remained unconscious, her condition still listed as critical.

Sarah was conscious, but the only motion she could make was to move her eyes. No words could be formed by her lacerated mouth, and even a slight adjustment to the blanket that covered her caused pain that was more powerful than the morphine could control.

Through the window of the ICU waiting room, the heavens looked dismal and foreboding to the brethren as they continued their vigil. They simply would not allow themselves to think the unthinkable. Earnestly they prayed, and watched for a sign from their beloved prophet.

On Tuesday Sister Branham regained consciousness, but her thinking remained confused. She had no recollection of the accident, but she was able to recognize friends and family members. Constantly she asked, "Where's Bill?" Her question would be answered frankly, but moments later she would repeat again, "Where's Bill?" She was moved from ICU to a room near Sarah on the second floor.

On Wednesday, December 22, the fourth day, visitors noticed a marked swelling of Brother Branham's left eye. The doctors had been closely monitoring the eye's condition for the past forty-eight hours, and after a series of tests, they determined that it was caused by the swelling of the brain. They sought the family's permission to operate immediately in order to remove a portion of the skull, just above the left temple, to give the brain more space. If the brain was allowed to touch the skull, they explained, death would be instantaneous.

There were sixty-five brothers in the waiting room when Billy Paul announced that an immediate surgery was necessary, and he asked the saints to pray with him before he signed the papers which would allow the doctors to proceed. After the prayer, they softly began to sing *On The Wings Of A Snow White Dove*. Through the window, a bright shaft of sunlight, that had miraculously slipped through the endless gray clouds that stubbornly covered the sky, filled the room where they were standing with a calming light. It was the first encouraging sign they'd seen.

According to the doctor's evaluation, the surgery went well, and Brother Branham was returned to the ICU. His head had been shaved for the surgery, and a coating of protective ointment covered his left eye, which remained open.

Several of the brothers took turns answering the special telephone that had been installed to handle all the inquiries concerning Brother Branham's condition. Day and night, from around the world, calls came into the hospital from shocked and grieving followers: Was it true?! Of course, Brother Branham would be healed, wouldn't he?! This would be the greatest miracle of his entire ministry, just wait and see!

Thursday, Doctor Hines, a bone specialist, spoke to the family concerning Brother Branham's left arm. From a condition that he had considered to be hopeless on Sunday, the bones had now aligned themselves to the place where he felt the arm could be

saved. If all went well, in a couple of days he would be able to place it in a cast. It was the first good news they'd had, and for the first time in five days, there was something to smile about.

At four thirty-seven, on the morning of December 24, Brother Branham stopped breathing on his own and was placed on a respirator. The nursing staff realized that the end was very near, and they tried in vain to prepare the family for the hours ahead. But they remained steadfast in their belief that God would provide the miracle that was needed. Sister Branham's condition was improving slowly, and Sarah's orthopedic brace was providing a measure of relief. Momentarily they expected to hear that Brother Branham had made an astonishing recovery.

Jack Palmer

It was about two in the morning, December 19th, when we received a call from friends in Tucson telling us about the wreck. I made a decision to go to Amarillo to lend what support I could to the family, and I left my home in Macon by eight o'clock that same morning.

When I arrived in Amarillo and walked into the terminal, two brothers from Phoenix, the Moseleys, walked up to me and offered me a ride to the hospital. When we arrived, we found about thirty people already there.

As inquiries began coming in from all over the USA and around the world, the hospital staff soon realized that they had a very important patient in ICU, and they even turned over their chapel to us for prayer vigils. Of all the hospitals that I have visited, there have been none as friendly, helpful and courteous as the staff at Northwest Texas Hospital.

The nurses in the ICU seemed to take a special interest in us. I recall going in one morning and the supervisor of the day shift walked over to where I was standing and said, "We nurses have had a little conference and we're trying to figure out who



you folks are." She began to smile and said, "I said that you are Mormons. Are you?"

I said to her, "No, we're not Mormons, we're Bible believing Christians, and we're nondenominational." She seemed a little disappointed that they had been wrong, but they began to bring cakes and make coffee for us.

It was the evening of the fifth day before I was permitted to visit Brother Branham. There was no response whatsoever when I spoke to him, and I cannot find the words to describe my feelings as I stood alone with him. You see, Brother Branham was not only God's prophet for our day, and the Seventh Angel Messenger, but he was like a

father to me and I loved him. He said to me one day, "Brother Jack, if you ever need me, call and I'll try to help you." Not once did he ever fail to keep that promise.

Friday evening, the 24th, I was in the hospital cafeteria with some brethren when someone came in and said, "Brother Branham just passed away." There was just a stunned silence for a minute or two, then I returned to the ICU waiting room. I was asked to take charge of the telephone and was given a list of calls to make, people waiting to hear any news about the prophet. There were more than thirty numbers on the list, and it was Christmas Eve. The telephone circuits were very busy, but when I was finally able to get an operator, I asked her if she would stay on the line with me, as I had so many calls to make. She said that she would be happy to, and I remember that between two calls she said these words to me, "Rev. Branham must have been a wonderful man." I said, "Yes, he was a wonderful man."

I placed one call to Venezuela where five hundred people had been praying around the clock. But it was time for Brother Branham to go.

When we were called into the room at the time of Brother Branham's passing, as far as I could tell, his head was turned to the east. The expression on his face reminded me of a gallant soldier. The firm look conveyed these words to me: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

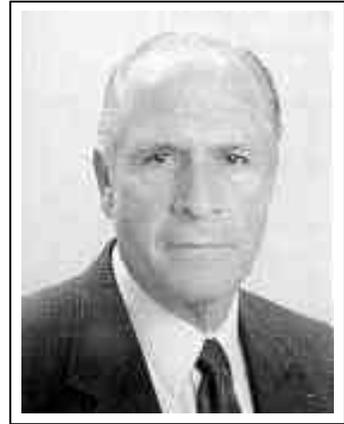
We gathered around the bed and softly sang *Only Believe*. There was a real peaceful feeling in the room.

We left to drive back home that same day, and there was such a silence in the car. None of us wanted to believe that this had really happened, and nobody was expecting it to turn out that way. I remember looking at the moon and the evening star. They were so

close together and so very bright.

Back in July of 1965, several brothers and myself were in Tucson and Brother Branham took us to a Mexican restaurant for lunch. Afterwards, in the car, he spoke to us about the three baptisms: the baptism of water, the baptism of Spirit, and the baptism of death. He was driving and he turned around and said, "You boys know I can't be with you much longer."

He took us to his new home and showed us around. In the front yard there was a wagon wheel and a cattle skull that had been placed against a pile of rocks. He pointed to it and said, "This is where an old prospector came to the end of his trail."



Richard Blair

But the doctors reported no change in Brother Branham's condition throughout the day. At supper time, Billy Paul was in the hospital's dining room when he received word that Doctor Hines wished to speak with him. He hurried back to the ICU waiting room, and the nurse on duty escorted him into the glassed-in consultation room next to the nurse's station. He could see that the curtain around Brother Branham's bed was drawn closed, but that was not unusual. The family had been called into the consultation room on several prior occasions, and now Billy Paul told himself that there was no need for alarm. Doctor Hines was only the orthopedic specialist, not the neurologist, who handled the *real* problems.

Doctor Hines walked into the room. "Mr. Branham, I have sad news to tell you. Your father passed away at five forty-nine this evening."

When speaking to his friends, on several occasions Brother Branham had told them, "If you ever hear that I am gone, just stop for a minute and sing one chorus of *Only Believe* in my memory. Now, in the waiting room, sixty-five men stood to their feet and began to sing the familiar words and melody, *Only believe, only believe, all things are possible, only believe*. And, somehow, they seemed to find consolation in the words, while in their hearts they were asking, "God, now what?"

Hanging low against the western horizon, the setting sun, the moon, and the evening star appeared to be within touching distance of one another.

After the prophet's passing, the ICU staff granted permission for seven friends of the prophet to gather

at his bedside for a final time before his body was taken by the funeral director. Grateful for this thoughtful courtesy, Billy Paul turned to Brother Pearry Green, who was at his side, and asked him to name seven from among the sixty-five men present. Turning his back to the room, Brother Green named off the first seven names that came to his mind: Holin Hickerson, Vernon Mann, Orlin Walker, Richard Blair, Welch Evans, John Martin, and Earl Martin.

On December 19th, when Brother Branham was brought to the ICU, there had been eleven other seriously ill or injured patients also being cared for. During the approximate one hundred thirty hours he spent in the Intensive Care Unit, not one death occurred, even though one man's heart stopped beating five times in a single night. Most of the patients had already been moved out of the ward, and the room was quiet as the friends gathered around the prophet's bedside.

Quoting from Second Kings 2:11, one of the brothers echoed the words of Elisha: "*My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.*"

As soon as the seven brothers left the ICU, Brother Branham's body was placed on a stretcher and covered with a deep red-colored blanket. Once again, Billy Paul turned to Brother Green, who had been his friend since they were in Bible school together, and said, "Pearry, take Daddy home."

Before he left Amarillo with the prophet's body, Rebekah gave Brother Green the box containing the brown suit which was to have been Sister Branham's Christmas gift to her husband. He delivered it to Mr. Coots, the funeral director in Jeffersonville.

The casket that was used to transport the prophet's body from Amarillo to Jeffersonville was later used by Mr. Coots for the burial of a pauper.

Pearry Green



At first I was shocked and undecided when informed that the body must be embalmed for shipment across the country, but then I remembered the Scriptures where Lazarus was bound with grave clothes and how Jesus had been embalmed. According to the Word of God, this had not hindered them. Resolutely, I turned to the funeral director and signed the necessary papers to have the embalming performed.

Brother Billy Paul had summoned me to the motel room, but before I went, I asked the funeral director to place the body in a separate room and lock the door for the period that I would be gone. Truthfully, I did not expect Brother Branham to be there when I returned.

Then the time arrived when I would have to leave with the prophet's body to fly to Jeffersonville. I was uneasy about going alone, and Brother Collins agreed to come to the airport with me. When we arrived at the funeral home, the body had been placed in a little gray casket, the lid had been closed. I felt it important that there be a witness that the prophet's body was still in that casket, therefore, I asked that it be opened so that Brother Collins could view it. This was done. The scene is indelibly impressed on my mind: Brother Branham's body was dressed in a white robe, his face glistening with oil, with such a glow from his face that it seemed to illuminate the room. I could think only of Brother Branham's own description of those "beyond the curtain of time." His body was loaded aboard the TWA flight, after the final loading of passengers and freight. I obtained a seat as close as possible to the area where the prophet's body rested in the baggage compartment. How often had I prayed before, upon entering an airplane, that the Lord would give me a safe journey, take me and use me, and bring me back safely to my family. This time was different; I said, "Lord, if you want to take Your prophet in a ball of fire, even as you did Elijah, it would be my pleasure to go with him."

We deplaned in St. Louis, the

prophet's body and I, for a layover period until the proper type of aircraft would be available to continue the journey. I never left the side of the casket, even as it was wheeled out across a vast airport to a warehouse. It was in this warehouse that I was to take up a vigil of six hours, with my ear pressed to the casket. Each moment, I expected to hear that prophet say, "Brother Green, get me out of here." It was cold and lonely in that warehouse. Thoughts raced through my mind, questions, more questions, ...now what?

Again the faithful Word came to my rescue: "Though one rise from the dead, they would not believe." After all, what would I do if he were to speak to me? Would anyone believe me if he did arise? Would Brother Billy Paul believe me? Would Brother Borders? or would they all blame me if the body was to turn up missing? At that time, I felt to ask the Lord whether I was being shown that he was to come forth with all the dead in Christ. Then I said, "Lord, don't let him rise here with just me. Wait until there are witnesses." I feared lest men would not believe me. And according to the Word, they would not - unless they were already predestinated to believe.

The Acts Of The Prophet, by Pearry Green; pg. 172 - 174.



On the day of Brother Branham's funeral, city streets surrounding the Tabernacle were closed in order to provide extra parking space for the overflow crowds.

The following day, transportation arrangements were made for Sister Branham, Sarah, Billy Paul, Loyce, Rebekah, Joseph, and George. Two small planes, especially equipped to carry stretchers were hired, and on Sunday morning the family began the last leg of their fateful journey to Jeffersonville. Sarah's sturdy back brace, an aluminum frame covered with leather, held her body rigidly in place from her neck to below her waist. Tightly rolled blankets prevented her from moving as the stretcher was being loaded aboard the airplane.

The nurses helped Sister Branham into her new quilted robe before she left the hospital. She had asked to be allowed to wear it, even though she still was not able to sit up and would be making the trip on a stretcher.

Friends who were returning to Tucson took Paul home with them and cared for him there until the family arrived back into town.

The funeral service for Brother Branham was held on December 29 at the Branham Tabernacle. Hundreds of people crowded into the sanctuary and overflowed into the parking lots to pay their final respects to a man whose life and ministry heralded the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Upon arriving in Jeffersonville, Sister Branham and Sarah had been taken by ambulance to Clark County Memorial Hospital. They were not able to attend the funeral service.

Even though he knew that to delay the burial of the prophet's body would likely give rise to rumors that could quickly be blown out of proportion, Billy Paul felt that the right to choose where Brother Branham should be buried belonged to only one person, Sister Branham. Certainly, it was not a decision to be made without careful consideration, even by an able person, and the fact remained that she simply was not capable of making the decision at that time. Although her condition was improving steadily, the doctors informed Billy Paul that it would be weeks before she was sufficiently recovered to understand fully what was being asked of her.

The only logical choice was to delay the burial until she was able to make the decision on her own, which is precisely what was done. Following the service at the Tabernacle, the casket bearing the prophet's body was returned to Coots' Funeral Home in downtown Jeffersonville where it was kept in a vault for a period of just over one hundred days.

On April 11, 1966, Brother Branham was buried in Eastern Cemetery, which is located just one block from the Branham Tabernacle.

Epilogue

Sister Branham was released from the hospital on January 15, 1966. Her recovery from the leg injury took several months, and the effects of the concussion lasted more than a year. She never recovered 'her memory of the days immediately preceding the accident, or of the accident. Sister Branham went to be with the Lord on May 12, 1981. She was buried next to her husband.

Sarah remained in the hospital until March 5, 1966, but she continued to need the orthopedic brace for eleven more months.

Today, Sarah is married and has eight children.

The family moved into the new house in Tucson, Arizona, on October 23, 1966.

"Now he belongs to the ages. "

Spoken by the Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton at the deathbed of Abraham Lincoln, April 14, 1865.

*“This Corruption has got to put on
incorruption, this mortal has got to put on
immortality. And it’s just one breath
between here and there. From old age
to youth, from time to Eternity...”*

William Branham

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