

# THE PENTECOST

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In this issue, we will look at Christ's commendation to His disciples for continuing with Him. We will also consider His great desire to ignite a spiritual fire on earth. We will then step forward in time and go from England to Nigeria, looking at the lives of men who have had God's fire, and whom God has used.

Shawn Stevens

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# A CHURCH ON THE ROCK

Sometimes, God does His greatest work through men and women whom you would not, initially, expect Him to use. Passed over by men, falling short of what everyone considers the basic requirements of leadership, a man is selected by God to be an object of His divine workmanship. One such man is Paul Adefarasin. Paul was born in Lagos, Nigeria, to caring parents. Wanting the best for him, they sent him to high school in England and to university in the United States. Despite all he had going for him, turmoil was brewing inside of Paul. He had begun experimenting with drugs and, before long, was thoroughly addicted. He became an outcast to family and friends and a disappointment to all who had previously believed in him. Paul's life was spinning out of control so he decided to return to Nigeria. There awaiting him was terrible news.

Paul's father was diagnosed with cancer and had been given three months to live. Paul was desperate. Who could help him? He turned to spiritualists and witchdoctors for assistance. To Paul's disappointment, witchcraft did not help. In the depths of despair, Paul turned to an old schoolmate for advice. This friend asked Paul to come with him to meet his mother. Paul was about to meet an amazing woman. She was a woman of great faith and she quickly gained Paul's trust. Paul told his story to this sympathetic listener and after a while, she offered to pray with him. Paul says, "As we prayed together she said with more sincerity and authority than I'd ever heard in anyone's voice, 'Father.' Immediately, the room was filled with the presence of God. She paused for what seemed like an eternity and then said again, 'Father.' Never before had I experienced the tangible presence of God like I did in that room as wave after wave of His essence washed over me. She

prayed for me first in English and then in the strangest language I had ever heard. Rather than alarm me, however, it actually comforted me a great deal."<sup>1</sup>

Something happened to Paul that day. He was no longer the same person. One day, a friend came to visit him and during their discussion the friend told Paul about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He prayed for Paul and, again, Paul had a special experience. He says, "Immediately, I felt God's power flow through me in an astonishing way... the next six months of my life were truly incredible as I felt the sovereign hand of God rest firmly on my life."<sup>2</sup> More good things were in store. Paul decided to visit his father and, while there, he laid hands on him and prayed for him to be healed. Miraculously, Paul's father recovered and lived for another seven years.

Saved and baptized in God's Spirit, Paul began sensing a call on his life to the ministry. He began a small house church with seven people and called it the "House on the Rock." Prayer became a huge emphasis. Prayer meetings would often carry on through the night. More people started coming and contributing. They expanded to holding meetings in a restaurant. Today, *House on the Rock* has a membership of seven thousand with thirty-six branch churches. They have community-based outreaches as well, such as a feeding program, relief for disaster victims, prison outreach and a rehabilitation program for former prisoners.

May God be praised for this good work.

<sup>1</sup> Paul Adefarasin, Paul. "The Kingdoms of This World." In *Out of Africa* (Ventura: Regal, 2004), 139.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

# CONTINUING WITH JESUS

The earthly ministry of Jesus Christ spanned three years. In those precious years, He performed miracles, healed the sick, cast out demons and taught the people the words of God. During this time he wasn't alone. He had with Him twelve disciples whom He had chosen. He had called them and they left their occupations, their old lives and, definitely, their comfort zones for the high privilege of following Jesus. Seeing Matthew sitting at a tax office, Jesus called to him, "Follow Me." Matthew rose, left his work and followed (Mark 2:14). Early in Jesus' ministry, He asked a young man named Simon to take him off-shore in Simon's boat. Once they are out in deeper waters, Jesus performed a miracle. Simon, frightened and in awe, said, "...Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (Luke 5:8). Instead of drawing back from Simon, Jesus showed interest in him and said, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." (Luke 5:10). We read further, "So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him." (Luke 5:11).

At times, following Jesus was glorious as huge crowds were drawn to Him and His teaching. However, it was not always this way. On one occasion, Jesus had been teaching the crowds on the narrowness of salvation, that it is only through Him. Many

were offended and began to leave. Jesus turned to His disciples and asked them if they also wanted to leave? Peter answered, saying, "...Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." (John 6:68). In other words, "Jesus, we are staying with You."

These events were early in Jesus' earthly ministry. Near the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus was together with His disciples again, this time in an upper room. His eyes moved from face to face. He had poured His life into them. The love He felt came out in His words as He said, "...With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." (Luke 22:15-16). A little while later, He said, "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials." (Luke 22:28). These were His disciples, His continuers.

Sadly, that same night they deserted Him. Many, throughout history, have done the same. But history isn't over yet. Your life and mine are still being recorded. Christian, are you, am I, continuing with Jesus? It is an upward climb, this continuing. But we have been given His Spirit. We have been given His word. We have been surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses who have faithfully gone before us. We have been given the company and fellowship of each other. Let us press onward and upward and live for the day when we shall Hear Him say, "...Well done, good and faithful servant..." (Mathew 25:33).

# SENDING FIRE ON THE EARTH

“I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!

*Luke 12:49*

Jesus Christ did not come to earth to establish a bible college, begin a music ministry, or to sit on a church board. Now, He may be involved in these things through the lives of His own people, but they were not His reason for coming to earth. What He did come to do was to set this place on fire or, more specifically, to set His followers on fire. There is more than one interpretation to Jesus' words in this verse, but I believe that He is talking about the fire of His Spirit being poured out and filling His disciples, beginning on the day of Pentecost. John the Baptist said, “...I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Luke 3:16). Jesus is this One.

One fact about fire is that it burns combustible materials and refines non-combustible materials. In a similar way, God's holy fire burns up apathy, dead religion, comfort zones, and things contrary to holiness. It refines us and makes us more like Jesus. A poem from an anonymous writer reads:

While the fire of God is falling,  
While the voice of God is calling,  
Brothers, get the flame.  
While the torch of God is burning,  
Men's weak efforts overturning,  
Christians, get the flame.

While the Holy Ghost is pleading,  
Human methods superseding,  
He, Himself the flame.  
While the power hard hearts are bending,  
Yield thy own, to Him surrendering,  
All to get the flame.

For the world at last is waking,  
And beneath His spell is breaking,  
Into living flame.  
And our glorious Lord is seeking  
Human hearts, to rouse the sleeping,  
Fired with holy flame.

If in utter self-surrender,  
You would work with Christ, remember,  
You must get the flame.  
For the sake of bruised and dying,  
And the lost in darkness lying,  
We must get the flame.

For the sake of Christ in glory,  
And the spreading of the story,  
We must get the flame.  
Oh, my soul, for thy refining,  
And thy clearer, brighter shining,  
Do not miss the flame.

Christian, is your life like a burning match? Are you, am I, hungry for revival? Or, are we happy with religion? Jesus wants to kindle fire. Would it not be sad to find that the windows of heaven have been wide open above us for years but the gates of our hearts have been firmly shut, also for years? On the day of Pentecost, who would we have been among? Would we have been one of the mockers who dismissed God's fire and its effects as drunkenness? Or would we have been with the God-fearing Jews, who marveled and exclaimed, “...we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” (Acts 2:11). Or better yet, would we have been tarrying and then experiencing God's fire in the upper room? It is easy to say, in retrospect, that we would have been, seeing that we have the whole story in the Scriptures today. But, really, who would we have been on that day? Who are we today, should, and when, God moves around us?

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William Booth expressed his own hunger for  
God's fire in the words of this song:

Thou Christ of burning, cleansing flame,  
Send the fire.  
Thy blood-bought gift today we claim,  
Send the fire.  
Look down and see this waiting host,  
Give us the promised Holy Ghost,  
We need another Pentecost,  
Send the fire.

God of Elijah, hear our cry,  
Send the fire.  
To make us fit to live or die,  
Send the fire.  
To burn up every trace of sin,  
To bring the light and glory in,  
The revolution now begin,  
Send the fire.

Tis fire we want, for fire we plead,  
Send the fire.  
The fire will meet our every need,  
Send the fire.  
For strength to ever do what's right,  
For grace to conquer in the fight,  
For power to walk this world in white,  
Send the fire.

To make our weak hearts strong and brave,  
Send the fire.  
To live a dying world to save,  
Send the fire.  
O see us on the altar lay,  
Our lives, our all, this very day,  
To crown the offering now we pray,  
Send the fire.

## **SERVANTHOOD**

I prayed, "Oh Lord, bless all the world,  
And help me do my part."  
And straightaway, He commanded me  
To bind a broken heart.

I prayed, "Oh bless each hungry child,  
May they be amply fed."  
He said, "Go find a starving soul,  
And share with him your bread."

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Dear friend, unless you really mean  
Exactly what you say;  
Until you mean to work with God,  
It's dangerous to pray.

Leola Archer

## **I'M HIS AND HE IS MINE**

My hope began when in God's plan  
His death, my ransom, paid.  
With no decay, and in three days  
He rose up from the grave.

Chorus:

Now I believe and I receive  
As Lord, the King of Kings.  
Now I believe and I receive  
The life His Spirit brings.  
I love Him so, and by faith I know  
I'm His and He is mine.  
I'm His, I'm His, I'm His and He is mine.

Yes, by faith and by His grace  
I'm grafted to the vine.  
His life flows in and fruits begin  
To grow in heaven's time.

Shawn Stevens

# THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF RICHARD BAXTER

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In the year 1615, Richard Baxter was born in London, England. In 1634, under the preaching of Walter Craddock and Joseph Symonds, he testified that he “felt a great pull on his soul.” Baxter had a wonderful conversion and, within four years, was ordained as a minister and appointed to a church in Kidderminster, England. He soon became known for his bold, fiery preaching. He testified that he did not fear displeasure from men, and that “I preached as never sure to preach again, ... and as a dying man to dying men.”

The Lord gave Baxter great victory in his ministry. When he first came to Kidderminster, he testified that there was only about one family per street who worshipped God. By the time he left Kidderminster, of his six hundred communicants there were not twelve whose salvation he doubted. For nineteen years he preached there, and one writer has said, “Through his preaching and the power of his holy life, the whole community was changed from a habitation of cruelty and immorality to a garden of true piety.”

In 1662, the government passed the *Act of Uniformity*, legislating a new prayer book and authorizing only ministers ordained by the Episcopalian Church. Baxter conscientiously objected to this development and, in 1685, was charged with libeling the church. He was fined four hundred pounds and, “Until this was paid, he was to lie in prison, bound over to keep the peace for seven years. It was last-minute clemency that saved this seventy-year-old Baxter from being tied to a cart's tail and whipped through the streets of London.”

As well as being a great preacher, Baxter was an avid writer. He wrote approximately two hundred books. Twenty thousand copies of his book, *Call to the Unconverted*, were printed and disbursed in just over a year. It was also translated into French, Dutch and Welsh. In addition, two hundred pamphlets are said to be his and he wrote two volumes of poetry. Baxter died in 1691.

Shawn Stevens

References: Leonard Ravenhill, *Sodom Had No Bible* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1996), 177-181.

Calamy's Life of Baxter, vol. 2, in *Historical Collections of Accounts of Revival*, ed. John Gillies (Fairfield: Fairfield Graphics, 1981). 147-148.

# NIGERIA NIGHT



Huddled tight for Nigeria night. This month, *Mountainview Alliance College and Career* devoted an evening to filling a mass order for copies of my book, *Salvation*, to be donated to ministries in southern Nigeria.

The flutter of paper and the clicking of staplers never sounded sweeter to me. Our desire is that the gospel would continue to spread in this great African country and that the Lord would bless His work there. We want to stretch our hands across the ocean and stand in faith with every African who loves Jesus, follows His word, and is believing God for revival.

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## BOOKS

In this issue I would like to feature two of my books. You may read these books on line or request a hard copy from this ministry. God bless you.

FALLING INTO  
THE HANDS  
OF THE  
LIVING GOD

### **FALLING INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD**

One of the most sobering facts that we can ever face in this life is that one day we will stand before God and answer for our lives. What does the Bible say about this great day? What hope is there that will enable us to face this day with peace? If this matter is unsettled in your heart, then I urge you to read this important book.

### **PIETISM**

They saw themselves as continuers of the Reformation. They had a passion for a living spirituality. They had a message that is just as pertinent to us today as it was in the eighteenth century. I invite you to consider the Christianity of the early pietists.

PIETISM