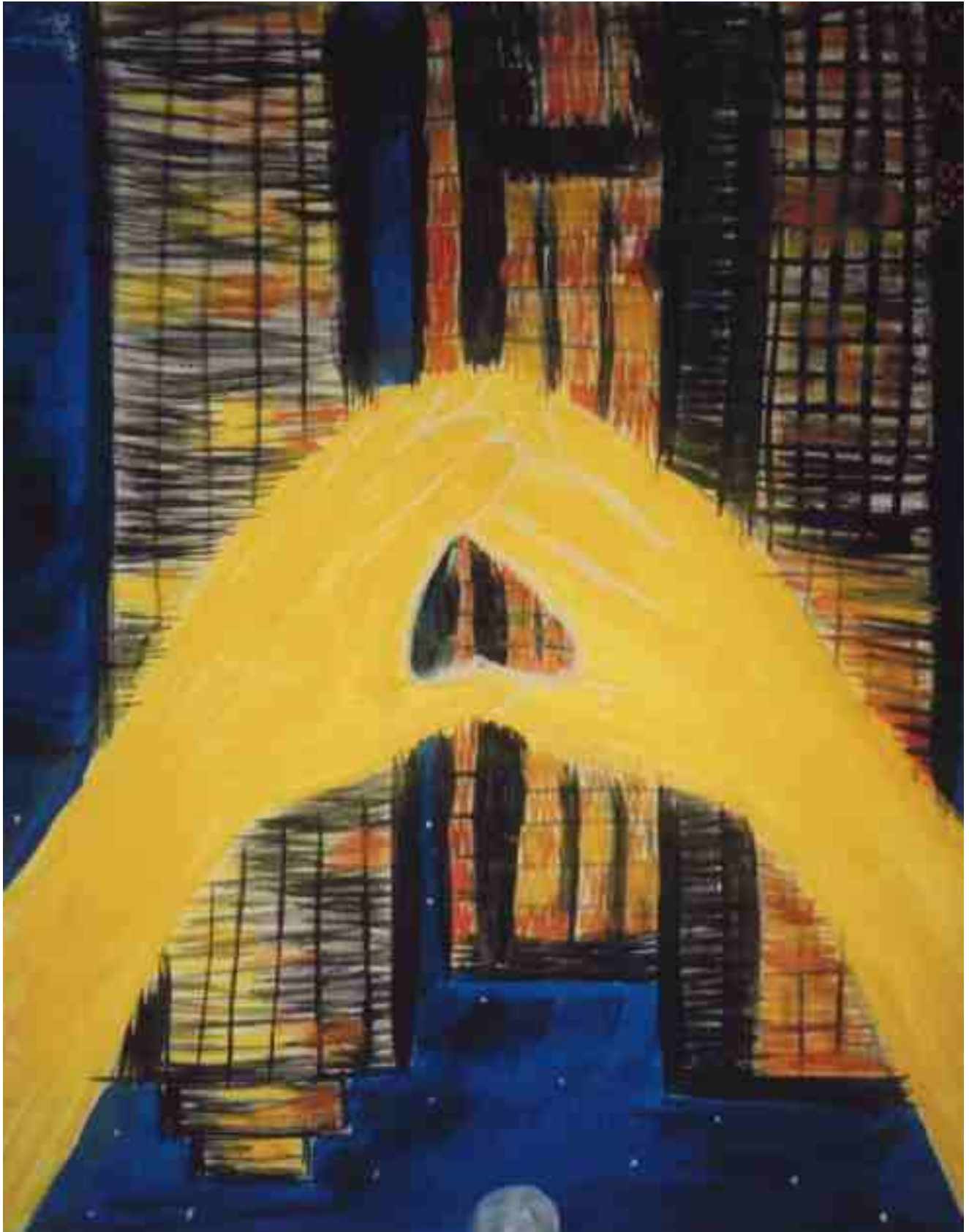


THE PENTECOST

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THE PENTECOST



Hello, and Happy New Year to you! In previous issues we have been looking at Old Testament revivals. The purpose for doing so was to lay a biblical foundation for revival, beginning with the Old Testament and continuing on with the New Testament. Just as January represents the passing over to a new year, for us January will represent the passing over to the New Testament in the study of revival. This issue will also feature an article on the Azusa Revival. This will be the first in a series of articles looking at Azusa and the lives of those involved in this great revival which broke out in 1906. I plan to run with this topic for quite a while.

Shawn Stevens

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NEW TESTAMENT REVIVAL - ACTS 1 & 2

If revivals occurred in Old Testament times, how much more would we expect them to occur in the days of the New Testament. Revival not only occurs in the New Testament, it heats up and finds a greater expression than it ever could have done under the Old Covenant. The Book of Acts records the beginnings of the Christian Church as a faith filled, Spirit baptized, revival experiencing community of believers.

After His resurrection, Jesus did not want His disciples to launch out into ministry immediately. Instead, He charged them to wait in Jerusalem for a spiritual experience which He called being "baptized with the Holy Spirit." He said, "... 'you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'" (Acts 1:4-5). Why were they to wait? Because revival fire was coming, and God was about to pour out His Spirit upon them. To baptize literally means to immerse someone. They were about to be baptized, or immersed, not with water, but with the Spirit of the living God.

So they did come together, in an upper room and in one accord, and prayed and waited for God. We read:

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come,

they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2.1-4)

God swept down upon them in revival power, with a sound from heaven like a rushing wind and it filled the house. This happened suddenly, not gradually. Each person there was instantly filled with God and the ecstasy of such an experience. They spoke with other tongues, foreign to themselves, unlearned, and these tongues told of the wonderful works of God.

What was the effect of this filling? Matthew Henry answers in these words:

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, more plentifully and powerfully than they were before. They were filled with the graces of the Spirit, and were more than ever under [H]is sanctifying influences – were now holy, and heavenly, and spiritual, more weaned from this world and better acquainted with the other. They were more filled with the comforts of the Spirit, rejoiced more than ever in the love of Christ and the hope of heaven, and in it all their griefs and fears were

THE AZUSA STREET REVIVAL

One might not think that a poor district of downtown Los Angeles would be the site of possibly the greatest spiritual awakening of all time. Unglamorous for other reasons, Azusa Street, Los Angeles, would become honored for the great move of God which happened there and which spread around the world. The Azusa Revival, which began in 1906, had the humblest of beginnings. It initially broke out in a prayer meeting in the home of a poor family. In the wake of Azusa, the world would never be the same.

God moved there in the home of the poor family, among the praying congregants, and their numbers grew till another facility was needed to hold the meetings. On Azusa Street, in the downtown industrial district, an old abandoned, two-story, frame building was rented to house the meetings. The name, *Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission*, was painted on the side of it and people from many different backgrounds and varying cultures came together to seek and experience God. From April 1906, and until at least 1908, revival meetings ran almost continuously. Participants came to the mission at just about any hour of the day or night and heard messages on sin, salvation, holiness and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The sounds of prayer and worship coming from inside the mission carried out into the streets and everyone was talking about the Azusa Revival. The revival produced a seemingly unending stream of testimonies of changed lives. The newspapers also ran stories on the revival. Other unusual phenomena accompanied the meetings. Eyewitnesses on the street reported seeing a glow emanating from the building and heard sounds that were similar to explosions coming out of it. On more than one occasion, the fire department came to the mission building because fire was seen rising from it. However, upon arrival, it was found that there was no natural fire.

The revival spread quickly throughout America and, by the end of 1906, it had spread to Norway. In 1907, it reached Scandinavia, Germany, Italy, Holland and South Africa. Pentecostalism has continued to spread. Today, there are over 200 million members of denominational Pentecostals and another 200 million Charismatics. One out of every four professing Christians in the world is either Pentecostal or Charismatic.²

One man who was both an eyewitness and a participant in the Azusa Revival was Frank Bartleman. He gives this account of the meetings:

Brother Seymour generally sat behind two empty boxes, one on top of the other. He usually kept his head inside the top one during the meeting, in prayer. There was no pride there. The services ran almost continuously. Seeking souls could be found under the power almost any hour of the day or night. The place was never closed or empty. The people came to meet God – He was always there. Hence a continuous meeting. The meeting did not depend on the human leader. God's presence became more and more wonderful. In that old building, with its low rafters and bare floors, God broke strong men and women to pieces, and put them together again for His glory. It was a tremendous overhauling process. Pride and self-assertion, self-importance, and self-esteem could not survive there. The religious ego preached its own funeral sermon quickly. No subjects or sermons were announced ahead of time, and no special speakers for such an hour. No one knew what might be coming, what God would do. All was spontaneous, ordered by the Spirit. We wanted to hear from God, through whomever He might speak. We had no respect of persons. The rich and educated were the same as the poor and ignorant, although the former found it much harder to die to self. We only recognized God. All were equal. No flesh might glory in His presence (1 Corinthians 1:29). He could not use the self-

²Roberts Liardon, *The Azusa Revival*, 12-13.

opinionated. Those were Holy Spirit meetings, led by the Lord. It had to start in poor surroundings to keep out the selfish, human element. All came down in humility together at His feet. They all looked alike and had all things in common, in that sense at least. The rafters were low; the tall must come down. By the time they got to Azusa, they were humbled, ready for the blessing. The fodder was thus placed for the lambs, not for giraffes. All could reach it.

We were delivered right there from ecclesiastical hierarchism and abuse. We wanted God. When we first reached the meeting, we avoided human contact and greeting as much as possible. We wanted to meet God first. We got our heads under a bench in the corner in prayer, and met men only in the Spirit, knowing them "after the flesh" no more (2 Corinthians 5:16). The meetings started themselves, spontaneously, in testimony, praise, and worship. The testimonies were never hurried by a call for "popcorn." We had no prearranged program to be jammed through on time. Our time was the Lord's. We had real testimonies, from fresh heart-experiences. Otherwise, the shorter the testimonies, the better. A dozen might be on their feet at one time, trembling under the mighty power of God. We did not have to get our cue from some leader; yet we were free from lawlessness. We were shut up to God in prayer in the meetings, our minds on Him. All obeyed God, in meekness and humility. In honor we "preferred one another." (See Romans 12:10). The Lord was liable to burst through anyone. We prayed for this continually. Someone would finally get up, anointed for the message. All seemed to recognize this and gave way. It might be a child, a woman, or a man. It might be from the back seat or from the front. It made no difference. We rejoiced that God was working. No one wished to show himself. We thought only of obeying God. In fact, there was an atmosphere of God there that

forbade anyone but a fool from attempting to put himself forward without the real anointing – and such did not last long. The meetings were controlled by the Spirit, from the throne. Those were truly wonderful days. I often said that I would rather live six months at that time than fifty years of ordinary life. But God is just the same today. Only we have changed. Someone might be speaking. Suddenly the Spirit would fall upon the congregation. God Himself would give the altar call. Men would fall all over the house, like the slain in battle, or rush for the altar en masse to seek God. The scene often resembled a forest of fallen trees. Such a scene cannot be imitated. I never saw an altar call given in those early days. God Himself would call them. And the preacher knew when to quit. When God spoke, we all obeyed. It seemed a fearful thing to hinder or grieve the Spirit. The whole place was steeped in prayer. God was in His holy temple. It was for man to keep silent. The Shekinah glory rested there. In fact, some claim to have seen the glory by night over the building. I do not doubt it. I have stopped more than once within two blocks of the place and prayed for strength before I dared go on. The presence of the Lord was so real.³

The presence of the Lord was real at Azusa, and it was the presence of the Lord which brought great change and transformation to people's lives. When God is experienced and yielded to in a meeting, people enter into an experience that is real. They enter into a spiritual experience which is more than just religion; it is a relationship with God. Azusa was a place where God's Spirit was outpoured. The deluge of this outpouring soaked not only Los Angeles, but the globe. One writer has said that from Azusa "... A tsunami of spiritual power and passion flooded every country of the world."⁴ The tidal flow of this wave has not ended. It is flowing even now.

Shawn Stevens

³Frank Bartleman, Azusa Street (New Kensington: Whitaker House, 1982), 56-58.

⁴Roberts Liardon, The Azusa Revival, 10.

swallowed up. They were also, for the proof of this, filled with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are especially meant here; they were endued with miraculous powers for the furtherance of the gospel.¹

The sound of these revival tongues carried outside and bystanders started arriving at opinions and commenting on what they saw and thought. Some recognised this to be a sacred experience and we read:

'Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, 'Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.' So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'Whatever could this mean?' (Acts 2.7-12)

While these ones marveled at this experience, others mocked it, saying that those in the upper room were drunk. With all of the confusion, on the part of the crowds, it was necessary for someone to stand up and explain what was happening. That someone was Peter, who said:

".. 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in

Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.

I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.'

(Acts 2.14-21)

Peter declared that this outpouring or revival was prophesied earlier by the Old Testament prophet, Joel. It was prophesied so should, therefore, have been expected. No one should have been surprised. It should have been welcomed and received. This was God coming down and filling men and women in a way that He had never done before. In Old Testament times, God poured out His Spirit on individuals, kings, priests and prophets. Now He was pouring out His Spirit on all flesh. This was an outpouring and a downpouring of God's Spirit upon lives and it

¹Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary On The Whole Bible vol VI. (Iowa Falls:

changed them radically. This was an enduing of power upon God's people, for service. This was revival.

This revival was a *last days* revival. The last days was not a month or a year; it is a period beginning with the New Covenant and continuing on until the return of Christ. This last days revival was full of tongues, prophecy, visions, dreams and wonders. Peter explained further that his hearers had crucified Jesus Christ, and that God had now raised Jesus from the dead. He said further; "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2.36).

When the people heard this, they were struck in their consciences. In that moment, God pulled back the curtain and they saw their guilt. It was horrible; they had crucified Jesus. Now God had very definitely showed His favor towards Jesus, as He had been doing all along, but now in a more dramatic way than ever, by raising Jesus from the dead. Peter was declaring the Lordship of Christ. The people cried out, asking what they should do? We read Peter's instructions and their response:

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse

generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2.38-47)

The people were arrested by their own consciences as God convicted them of the crime. They could not ignore Peter's words. The guilt and misery was too heavy a chain for them to carry and live with. However, their sin did not have to be their ruin. Instead, they repented and were forgiven. Threethousand were converted. This was a miracle greater than the feeding of the five thousand. It was a miracle of the heart, which changed their lives as well. With new hearts they could now praise God.

The revival in the Book of Acts, Chapter two,
continued on back page

was a prophesied, last days, revival and the last days are not over yet. If the day of Pentecost, in the Book of Acts, was the last days then how much more is it the last days today? How much more then, should we be holding on to Joel's prophecy and desiring, believing, expecting, and calling out for revival in our day? We need an outpouring and a downpouring of God's Spirit. Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, we are like those Jews who heard Peter's message and we stand convicted, and are arrested by our own consciences. We have sinned and have not followed in Your way. It is like killing You all over again. What shall we do? We come in repentance and ask You to forgive us. Then, Lord, revive us we pray. Let there be a sound from heaven, and come down by Your Spirit and fill this house. Let there be a mighty rushing wind. Baptize us with Your Spirit, Lord. We wait and pray. We need an immersing. Lord, we have seen some gradual changes, but we need You to come with a sudden revival. May our griefs and fears be swallowed up and give way to Your sanctifying influence as you come in resurrection power to restore and revive us. May we be filled plentifully, and completely. May we be weaned from this world and acquainted with heaven. Lord, come in power and may the sound of it catch the attention of others. Lord, we need Your Spirit to be poured out on all flesh. May our sons and daughters prophecy. May our young men see visions. May our old men dream dreams. Will You pour out Your Spirit on Your menservants and maidservants? Lord, let there be tongues, prophecy, visions, dreams, and wonders and let everyone who calls on Your name be saved. Lord, these are the last days. We look and call to You. Amen.

Shawn Stevens

HIS LIGHT IS SHINING FORTH

Open your eyes and He will show you great and mighty things.

In all the earth creation speaks of Him and His glory.

His power, might and glory will be seen in all the earth.

His light is shining forth.

No corner is forsaken as He brings this work to birth.

Those with eyes to see will see His Spirit going forth.

Across the earth He travels with revival for His Church.

His light is shining forth.

Break out, break forth in triumph in the name of Christ our Lord.

He won the battle's victory when God's wrath on Him was poured.

His death released the power for mankind to be restored.

His light is shining forth.

Shawn Stevens and Ramona Balzer