

# THE PENTECOST

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*Hello, you are reading November's issue of The Pentecost and we will be discussing post-flood history. As well, we will discuss God's plan of salvation, faith and the end of the world. The first three sections, even though they have separate titles, are meant to be read as one article. God bless you!*

**Shawn Stevens**

*The old saying is that history repeats itself. However, God, in His mercy, has given us freewill so we can choose to learn from the mistakes of the past and ask God for strength and wisdom to make right choices.*

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## IN THIS ISSUE

POST-FLOOD HISTORY .....	3 - 5
FAITH .....	5
WE HAVE COME FULL CIRCLE .....	5-6
VISION AND MESSAGE .....	7
NO BOTTOM .....	7

## POST-FLOOD HISTORY

We spent some time in the last issue of *The Pentecost* discussing the events of creation and world history up to, and including, the Great Flood. The history of the world did not end with the flood for God, in His grace, spared Noah, his family and all of the creatures who were inside the ark. At God's appointed time, the flood waters began to recede from the Earth. The ark came to rest atop of Mount Ararat and Noah, his family and the animals were released. God blessed Noah and his sons and instructed them to multiply and populate the Earth.

Noah's descendants did not follow in his godly example and it wasn't long before humanity, once again, was thoroughly corrupt. With every generation things continued to worsen and, instead of following God and His ways, "...everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17.6).

The Bible teaches that "[a]ll unrighteousness is sin, ..." (1 John 5.17). Jesus Christ further taught that "... from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man." (Mark 7.21-23). Sin resides in the hearts of men and women, staining them and marking them as transgressors of God's laws. When we are ruled by sin, we become self-centered and self-driven. We then join a pursuit to obtain more for self. Ironically, the path to self-gratification is also the path to self-destruction.

The Bible warns of being "... hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3.13). Sin not only stains and marks us, it hardens us, so that we can walk further down its pathway. The person in this condition is capable of all things vile and abusive. Jesus also said; "...Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." (John 8.34). Slavery to sin is the worst kind of slavery. Stained and marked, the slave continues down his path, becoming more hardened. If he is not reconciled to God before his death, at the point of his death, he is taken to a place of judgment that the Bible calls hell.

God, seeing mankind and each of us personally in this condition, was moved with compassion and determined to do something about the situation. His solution came in the form of a person, His very Son, Jesus Christ.

The Bible teaches that in the past God spoke to people through His prophets and that now, in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Own Son (see Hebrews 1.1-2). Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Before His birth an angel appeared to His mother, Mary, saying these words:

*And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.' Then Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I do not know a man?' And the angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1.31-35).*

We read that "the Son of the Highest" and "the Son of God" would be the title of this Holy Child. At the time of Jesus' baptism, the Bible records that the heavens were opened to Jesus and He saw the Spirit of God descending upon Him. Suddenly, there came a voice from heaven saying; "... 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" (Matthew 3.17). Jesus Christ frequently referred to God as His Father. On one occasion, having miraculously saved His disciples from a fierce storm, they turned to Him in amazement, saying; "... 'Truly You are the Son of God.'" (Matthew 14.33).

As well as being the Son of God, Jesus Christ had no sin in Him. He was innocent and clean of any and every offence that you and I have committed. The Scripture refers to Him as the One "'Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth';" (1 Peter 2.22). The Scripture also says that "... in Him there is no sin." (1 John 3.5). We also read; "For Christ also suffered once

for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, ..." (1 Peter 3.18).

Jesus Christ healed the sick, cast out demons and taught the people. However, He had a greater purpose in coming to Earth than any of these things. He came to save mankind from mankind's greatest plight, slavery to sin and eternal judgment. Sinful mankind was still facing God's judgment of death because God's original commandment, in the garden of Eden, required death as a penalty for disobedience to God. All of our individual sins were stacking up and recorded as offenses against God. God had declared; "Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father As well as the soul of the son is Mine; The soul who sins shall die." (Ezekiel 18.4). God's solution to our plight is the sinless Jesus dying in our place, taking the penalty of death, that He did not deserve, upon Himself. The Bible says; "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5.21).

In fulfillment of Scripture, Jesus Christ was betrayed by a friend and brought before a Roman governor. False charges were made against Him, and He did not argue in His own defense. At the will of the angry crowd, He was sentenced to crucifixion. He was whipped, beaten and a crown of sharp thorns was placed upon His head. He carried a heavy cross for part of the distance to the place of execution. Nails were driven into His hands and feet, pinning Him to the jagged wood. As He suffered there, He heard the cry of someone beside Him; "... 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.'" (Luke 23.42). It came from a thief who was being crucified alongside Jesus. In desperation, knowing he would die, this thief implored Christ. Jesus spoke to him these words; "... 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'" (Luke 23.43). Forgiven of his sins, the thief was now destined to spend eternity with Jesus. Darkness fell and, in His dying moments, Jesus cried out with a loud voice; "... 'Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.'..." (Luke 23.46).

Christ's body was taken down from the cross and a certain man, Joseph from Arimathea, received

permission to bury the body in his own tomb. The body was wrapped in a linen cloth and placed inside the tomb. The tomb was then firmly sealed by a large rock and a guard of soldiers was stationed outside of it. The reason for the soldiers being there was that Christ had prophesied that, after three days, He would resurrect from death. Although the authorities did not expect this to happen, they did suspect that Christ's disciples might try to steal the body and claim that He resurrected.

On the third day this Roman guard was met, not by the disciples but, by a mighty angel descending from heaven. The angel easily removed the stone and the guards, terrified beyond words, fled the scene. Out of the grave came the Lord Jesus Christ, triumphant over death. No power on earth or in hell could keep Him down or rob Him of His greatest victory. Word quickly began spreading throughout Jerusalem that Jesus Christ was alive, resurrected from the grave! (See John Chapter 20 and Matthew Chapter 28).

Jesus Christ said:

*I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. ( Revelation 1.18)*

If Christ's death was, therefore, on our behalf, to free us from sin and sin's penalty and to restore us to fellowship with God, then how are we personally brought into this victory? At the beginning of Jesus's ministry, He made this public statement; "... 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.'" (Mark 1.15). Jesus called for two things, repentance and belief in the gospel. What is repentance? Repentance is a decision, made by us, to turn from our own ways (sin) and follow Jesus Christ and His way. It is the opposite of self-gratification; it is self-denial in whatever area or areas Christ requires of us. We don't have the ability within ourselves to reform ourselves and conform to God's way. However, God will supply the ability for us to follow Him if we ask Him to forgive and save us, and if we repent by the ability that He supplies. Jesus and His disciples carried this call to repentance far and wide. Scripture records that "... they went out and

preached that people should repent.” (Mark 6.12). God was serious when He first commanded mankind not to eat of the forbidden tree. He is serious also in His New Testament commands and “... now commands all men everywhere to repent,” (Acts 17.30). We also read; “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,” (Acts 3.19).

## **FAITH**

*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.  
(Romans 5.1-2)*

Friend, you may have done many good things in your life. You may have given generously to others. You may have gone out of your way to help someone caught in a struggle. You may even be knowledgeable about religion. However, God is looking for something specific from you and me. The Bible teaches; “ But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (Hebrews 11.6). Jesus Christ spoke of a day when He would be coming back to Earth. Concerning that day, He asked this question; “...Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” ( Luke 18.8). Jesus Christ, when He returns, will be looking for faith. On another occasion, Jesus asked his disciples this question; “ ... How is it that you have no faith?” (Mark 4.40). Friend, perhaps He would ask you the same question. Do you have faith? Maybe you are asking; “What is it that I am to have faith in?” Begin believing the things which I have discussed; firstly, that out of our hearts rise sinful things that mark, stain and defile us; that when we sin, we become transgressors of God’s laws and deserving of judgment. Next, believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He has no sin of His own; believe that He died in our place, as our substitute, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; believe that He resurrected from death and, having

victory over death, He can grant spiritual life to you and me. Next, believe that He will forgive, change and save us, if we come to Him in repentance and faith. Having accepted these truths, we must put our faith in the person of Jesus Christ. How do we do this? Faith can be expressed in prayer. Call out to Him, asking for forgiveness for your sins, and call out to Him, committing your life to follow Him. If we come to Jesus Christ in faith, He will receive us as God’s child, purifying our hearts by faith. The Bible tells us: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1.12-13).

## **WE HAVE COME FULL CIRCLE**

Remember the people who made up the society in which Noah lived. Remember how God’s heart was grieved because the thoughts of their hearts were “...only evil continually.” (Genesis 6:5). Their hearts were stained and marked by sin. They were self-centered, racing down the path of self-gratification and self-destruction. The self-destruction came to their own souls, and self-destruction became the destruction of their very lives as God erased them from the earth in a world-wide flood. The generations that descended from Noah also followed this sinful path, mostly ignoring God’s ways. In general, “everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” Generation after generation has followed this course, up until our present day.

Again God’s heart is grieved. What can we expect will be His action upon ourselves? Jesus Christ spoke of a day in which He would come back to Earth. However, this time He would not be coming as a baby in a manger. This time He would be coming as the Judge of all the Earth. He called this time “the days of the Son of Man”. This is what He said specifically; “And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.” (Luke 17.26-27).

Here Jesus was prophesying destruction upon the sinful generation that is alive at the time of His return. Jesus further said:

*'But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.'* (Luke 21.34-36).

Noah's generation had a "preacher of righteousness," (see 2 Peter 2:5) Noah. I can imagine Noah pleading with them to turn to God and His ways. For many, it was probably only as the waters were rising upon them that they realized that they had deafened their ears to God's call, and that repentance and faith would have granted them entrance into Noah's ark. They were judged in a judgment of water. The unrepentant, who have no faith, at the time of His final coming, have been reserved for a judgment of fire.

The apostle Peter writes in 2 Peter 3.1-13:

*Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.' For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved*

*by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

The Bible tells us that, in the last days, scoffers will rise up, follow the pathway of sin and mock the truth that Christ is returning to Earth. Perhaps they will invent other theories to explain the world around them. Perhaps their theories are sophisticated and widely accepted, but they willfully forget the way it really came about, a result of creation by God. They also forget the judgment that fell upon Noah's society. We are told to not forget this one thing; "that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." The Lord is not slow in returning but, rather, He is giving us time to repent. The long-suffering patience of a God who is daily grieved at our absence of repentance and faith is about to expire. We are living on repentance time. God does not want to see us perish but, rather, to see us repent. We have seen the pattern of sin that the generations following Noah continued in. We have also seen the love of God displayed in sending His Son to die

for our sins and then rising again from death. Jesus is the sinless Son of God, but He carried your sins and mine and took our penalty that we might be forgiven. Friend, if you have not done so already, it is time to repent and believe in the gospel. It is time to believe in Jesus Christ and put your faith in Him. We are living on repentance time. God bless you.

**Shawn Stevens**

The following two articles came from the 1906 Apostolic Faith magazine, the official magazine of the Azusa Street Revival.

## **V**ISION AND MESSAGE

A sister who has been healed and baptized with the Holy Ghost related the following vision. “Two days ago the power of God came over me and He said 'Whatsoever ye ask in my name believing, ye shall receive.' I said 'Give wisdom to speak to the people.' Immediately I was in a great hall with tables spread all about, and the Lord was the waiter, and I saw His beautiful, smiling face. He spoke to me and said, 'I have called my friends and they did not come, therefore go out and ask everyone you find to come to the wedding.' As I looked around to see something beautiful, the scene changed and I was in a hospital and saw poor creatures dying, looking like skeletons. I thought my call was to the hospital and telephoned to know when it was open for visitors, but the Lord revealed to me that it meant all those who are sick in their souls.”

Reference :

The Apostolic Faith, Vol. 1. No. 2, November, 1906. Los Angeles :  
The Pacific Apostolic Faith Movement.

## **N**O BOTTOM

We meet many honest souls these days who are under the delusion that they have committed the unpardonable sin. The following incident should be an encouragement to such.

A child of God was attacked by the enemy with the suggestion that she was forsaken of God and had committed the unpardonable sin. She was then on a mission field in the South, separated from other Christian workers; and without any apparent cause, the arch enemy who tempted our Savior told her that God hated her. The words, “God hates you” seemed to be continually shouted in her ears and she could not get away from it. She lost her faith and believed the enemy, not knowing his power. The next suggestion was, “Drown yourself in the river.” She stood looking into the dark water, but the thought of her dear mother made her turn away.

She returned to her room, and throwing herself down, fell asleep and dreamed. She seemed to be on a boat on which all the people but herself were rejoicing and praising God. She heard the captain call out to the pilot, “Sound the depths and compare it with the love of God.” The depths were sounded and the call came back “No Bottom! No Bottom!” She awoke in an ocean of God's love, all darkness past and the cry ringing in her ears, “No bottom!” For years since then she has been in Gospel work on both sides of the ocean.

Reference :

The Apostolic Faith, Vol. 1. No. 1, September, 1906. Los Angeles :  
The Apostolic Faith Movement.



The dove is representative of myself at a time when I believed in God but was unsure of some teaching that I was learning about Him. I felt afraid and unsure of what was truth. It was at this time that I called out to Jesus in prayer and I had a vision of this. The large hands open wide are representative of Jesus' hands with His glory as the yellow light radiating out from them. I believe He was saying to me that it was okay, that He could be trusted, that He loved me and would not hurt me. So it was that I decided not to worry but just to rest in Jesus' love. Thus the dove representing myself is at first flying overhead and then as it sees the open hands of Jesus, decides to land there and rest. The white surrounding the hands is in the shape of a heart representing love.

There is no love like Jesus' love. It can always be trusted, and there is no safer place than in the hands of Jesus. A scripture that talks more about the characteristics of His love is I Corinthians 13: 4-7. Ramona Stevens