

# THE PENTECOST

VOLUME 441 OCTOBER 2020







It is October, 2010, and we want to pass on to you our warmest greetings and blessings. In this issue of The Pentecost, read about Jesus Christ and His crucifixion, resurrection and atoning sacrifice. God bless you.

**Shawn Stevens**

In the last issue, we looked at who Jesus is and briefly at His life on earth. Now let's look more closely at why His death and resurrection is so important for us today, and for all generations.

**Ramona Stevens**

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#### A WORD OF CORRECTION

If you have been given a copy of my new booklet "The Crucifixion, Resurrection And Atoning Sacrifice Of Jesus Christ" an error in quotation has been found. Luke 23:34 on page 4 is not complete. The full verse in the New King James reads: "Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided His garments and cast lots." I believe that I have given out ten copies with this error. If you have one of them please accept my apology, tear it up and request a corrected copy. Thank you.

Shawn Stevens

## The Crucifixion, Resurrection and Atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ

Prayer: Lord, open the eyes of my heart and soul to understand Your crucifixion and the cup from which You had to drink. I want to fully understand the reason for it and what it means for me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

It is popular today to wear a cross as a pendant, on a necklace or as earrings. You may even have one on a wall in your home, or have one hanging from the mirror in your car. However, in the first century, there was nothing popular or pleasant about a cross. It was understood by all to be a sign of torture and death. There is no man who has endured so great a torture, even to the point of death, as Jesus Christ Himself. The Bible tells us; "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45).

In the last days before His crucifixion, the Bible records Jesus sharing a final supper with His disciples. As they gathered around a table, Jesus proceeded to break bread, hand it to them and say; "... , 'Take, eat; this is My body.'" (Matthew 26:26). This broken bread symbolized His body which would soon be broken upon the cross. He next gave thanks and shared with them a cup of wine and said; "... , 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.'" (Matthew 26:27-28). The drink symbolized His precious blood. The bread and drink were symbolic of what was about to happen shortly. Jesus and His disciples then went to a place called the Garden of Gethsemane. There, Jesus found a spot alone where He prayed to His Father and reflected upon what He knew was about to happen to Him. The Bible says that He was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death; "And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground." (Luke 22:44). Soon, armed soldiers came for Him. His disciples, it appeared, were prepared to fight. One of His disciples did act violently and, with a sword, cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. Jesus interrupted

at this point. Let us look at two accounts of His response:

*Then Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?'*

Matthew 26:52-54

Again, in the Book of John, it is said this way; "So Jesus said to Peter, 'Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?'" (John 18:11).

Jesus was then taken and tried by the Jewish leaders and, finally, by Pontius Pilate and, at the will of the crowds of people, a death sentence was passed upon Him. He was blindfolded, beaten, spit upon, mocked and even a crown of thorns was placed on His head. Despite the agony of His wounds, He was made to walk to a place called Golgotha, while carrying His cross for a part of that distance. Nails were driven into His hands and feet and His cross, with Him upon it, was erected for all to see. In His final hours, He granted eternal life to one of the two thieves who was also being crucified beside Him. He prayed to God, His Father, asking God to forgive even the executioners who were doing this to Him. His very words were; " ... , 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' ..." (Luke 23:34). He cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His Spirit.

Dear reader, I wonder if you understand the cup from which Jesus Christ had to drink. For, remember, in the Garden of Gethsemane when His disciples, or at least Peter, would have fought for His freedom, He stopped them from doing any more than they did with these words; "... , 'Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?'" (John 18:11). The cup, which symbolizes the wrath of God, was prepared for us as a consequence for our many sins. Jesus drank it instead, to spare us from this fate. Remember, He could have prayed for twelve legions of angels to deliver Him. However, that would have left you and me holding the cup, leaving us without hope before the judgment throne of God.



He was despised and rejected by men. He was oppressed and afflicted. He was silent before His accusers, like a lamb before his shearers. He was cut off from the land of the living. We read in Isaiah:

*Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried;  
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.  
But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for  
our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,  
And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone  
astray, Each of us has turned to his own way;  
But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.*

*Isaiah 53:4-6*

## THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

The account of the life of Jesus Christ does not end with His death on the cross, but it triumphs with His resurrection from the dead. Before His death, Jesus repeatedly spoke about this great miracle that would occur:

*Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again.'*

*Luke 18:31-33*

We also read in the Book of John:

*Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body. So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.*

*John 2:19-22* In this passage, Jesus is dealing with Pharisees who were

insisting that they be shown a miraculous sign that would confirm Jesus' authority. Jesus responded by saying that the temple would be destroyed and He would raise it up. They thought that He was referring to the temple in Jerusalem but, rather, He was referring to His very own body which would be destroyed in death and raised in resurrection.

As these, and other prophecies of Christ's death, found their fulfillment in the crucifixion so, also, the world had to wait only three days for the greatest miracle and further fulfillment of these divine prophecies. His body was laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The opening was sealed with a large boulder. A Roman garrison was deployed to guard the tomb. However, at the appointed time, the ground shook with a violent earthquake and an angel descended and moved the boulder. We read:

*Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you.' And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples.*

Matthew 28:1-8

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has very important meaning. It was the final proof that everything He had said was true. Because He rose from physical death to life, then ascended to heaven, He has the authority to grant spiritual life to spiritually dead men and women. His resurrection also is held out as proof that He will judge the world. As we quoted earlier, God "... is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead. '" (Acts 17:30-31).

In the Book of Revelation, John records seeing a vision of Christ:

*When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."*

Revelation 1:17-18

Jesus' death is pictured and prophesied throughout the Old Testament, being representatively seen through such sacrifices as Abel's sacrifice (see Genesis 4:4), the Passover lamb (see Exodus 12:1-28) and the Levitical sacrifices (see Leviticus 1-7).<sup>1</sup>

## ATONEMENT

While some have talked of Jesus' death as being simply a great example of obedience to God, it is this and more. Jesus' death was not just an example; it was an atonement. This is what Jesus did, that is, He provided an atonement. The penalty which we deserve for our sins, He suffered in our place, that we might be forgiven.

Jesus is the Savior Who takes our sins away and brings salvation to our souls. That is why the Bible records the angels' announcement; "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.'" (Luke 2:10,11).

Atonement is the basis for God's forgiveness. God is a God of great forgiveness. His Word teaches us; "For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And I will remember their sins no more." (Hebrews 8:12).

Probably the best Old Testament scriptures which show us Christ's death as being on our behalf are in Isaiah 53:5-6:

*But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.*



## Isaiah 53:5-6

We transgressed the laws of God – He was wounded. We committed iniquity – He was bruised. He was chastised for our peace. We had gone astray and the LORD laid on Him the iniquity of us all. This is atonement.

It is because Jesus' blood was shed that our life can be spared. It is because His blood was poured out that our sins may be forgiven and washed away. That is why the Scriptures say: "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." (Romans 5:9) and; "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;" (1 Peter 3:18). Another scripture which shows the cleansing power of Jesus' blood reads: "but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7).

Jesus was condemned and, through what He has done on our behalf, we may receive pardon. Pardon is to be acquitted of guilt and penalty. This is mankind's greatest need. We can receive pardon because Jesus' death has power to take away our sins. Again, the Scriptures say; "You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin." (1 John 3:5).

Friend, the reason Jesus "was manifested," or came to this world, was to take away your sins and mine. We read; "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8).

Friend, one day, around two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ drank a very bitter cup. It was the cup of God's wrath. He did not deserve this wrath, but drank it on your behalf and on mine. He was accused falsely. He was sentenced to death. He was mocked. He was whipped and beaten. He, Himself, carried His cross part of the way to Golgotha's hill. He was nailed to it. From the cross He did not utter threats or hate. Instead, He offered words of hope and forgiveness. Now that same forgiveness is offered to you. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The atoning sacrifice has been made for our sins. If you don't know what it is like to have your sins forgiven

by God, then come to Him today. All that is needed is your response of surrendering to God and of having the atonement applied to your own sins, personally. Heaven waits, God the Father waits, and Jesus Christ waits, for you to surrender your whole life to Him and His will, and for you to repent and put faith in Him and His sacrifice. Jesus has suffered for you and for me. We committed sin and He was totally pure. Yet He suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, that we would be brought to God for forgiveness, restoration, healing, deliverance and for a new life of following Him. It is right for the person who realizes his or her guilt and sin to cry out to God for forgiveness. Such a cry of surrendering one's life to God and pleading for His forgiveness will never be ignored by God. Scripture records numerous prayers of people who called on God for forgiveness. The prophet Daniel prayed; "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name." (Daniel 9:19).

King David prayed; "For Your name's sake, O Lord, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great." (Psalm 25:11).

We are told in Luke's Gospel of the tax collector in Jesus' parable who prayed; "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'" (Luke 18:13).

Friend, if you do not know the Lord's salvation and forgiveness, then it is time for you to pray. Call out to God in your own words.

I would like to pray for your soul:

Lord Jesus, today we have come once again to remember Your sacrifice of love and atonement for us. Lord, You did not come to this world to be served but to serve others and to give Your life a ransom for many. Your blood is precious. The shedding of Your blood at Calvary was the only sacrifice worthy and sufficient to atone for human sin. Your blood washes sin away. Lord, I pray for readers as they desire to be free from the curse of sin, guilt and judgment. They have gone astray; we all like sheep have gone astray, we have turned, every one, to our own way and the LORD has laid on You the iniquity of us all, Lord, the sacrifice of Your life was a substitution for ours. We transgressed, yet You were wounded. We committed iniquity, yet You were bruised. You were chastised for our peace. I pray for these souls, that they would know the peace of having

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their sins taken away, that they would know the peace of pardon. Lord, You are a very forgiving God. As they call out to You in surrender and ask for Your forgiveness, be merciful to their unrighteousness and remember their lawless deeds no more. Lord, You not only died, You rose again and conquered death. You won the victory over sin, death and evil and You are triumphant. As these ones cry out to You, committing to repent of their self-rule and give their lives to follow You, let faith rise up in them. Let this be the moment of faith and belief that You call for. Let this be the moment that You establish a relationship with them. Hold them in Your arms and may they know in their heart Your great salvation. Amen.

## Shawn Stevens

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If you have been given an old copy of my booklet, "The Crucifixion, Resurrection And Atoning Sacrifice Of Jesus Christ," or if you have read it online before September 13, 2010, an error in quotation of the New King James Version has been found. Luke 23:34 on page 4 is not complete. As of January 1, 2013, I have converted this verse to the New American Standard Version. I believe that I have given out ten errated copies. If you have one of them please tear it up and request a corrected copy. Thank you.

Shawn Stevens

### ENDNOTES

1. Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Lectures In Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 229.
2. John Miley, D.D., LL.D., *Systematic Theology, Vol. 2* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publications, 1989), 79. "Systematic Theology, Vol. 2 by John Miley, D.D., LL.D. copyright 1989 by Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

### REFERENCES

Miley, John, D.D., LL.D. Systematic Theology, Vol. 2. Peabody: Hendrickson Publications, 1989. "Systematic Theology, Vol. 2 by John Miley, D.D., LL.D. copyright 1989 by Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

Thiessen, Henry Clarence. Lectures In Systematic Theology. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989.

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## Finding Peace For Your Soul

Pain often leaves a stain  
Especially if we refrain, from exposing it.  
When we hide it inside bit by bit  
It becomes too much to bear  
And we wonder if there is anyone to care  
But if we are willing to go deep  
We will find there is One whose love is free to  
keep.

Jesus not only created us  
But He sees our every care and fuss  
He calls us to come to Him  
When the day seems dim  
His light shines bright:  
His word is always right.

Call out in Jesus' name  
Surrender to Him your shame  
Confess to Jesus your fear  
He will draw near.

Surrender to Him your will  
Then sit, and be still  
He will speak to you  
As sure as the morning dew  
In His presence you will find love that abounds  
And His peace that understanding confounds.

**Ramona Stevens**

I composed this poem at a stage in my life when I was going through a deep depression. I cried out to Jesus to help me, as I still believed in His love and grace, even though He seemed so far away at the time. I believe it was in His mercy that He brought these words to my mind. This poem flowed out within minutes and reminded me that, in my relationship with Jesus, He has unconditional love and He promises to never leave me nor forsake me. (see Hebrews 13:5) I hope that this poem is of special encouragement to you who are feeling despair or depression, to know that there is hope in Jesus. Would you call out to Him today, as I did?

Ramona Stevens