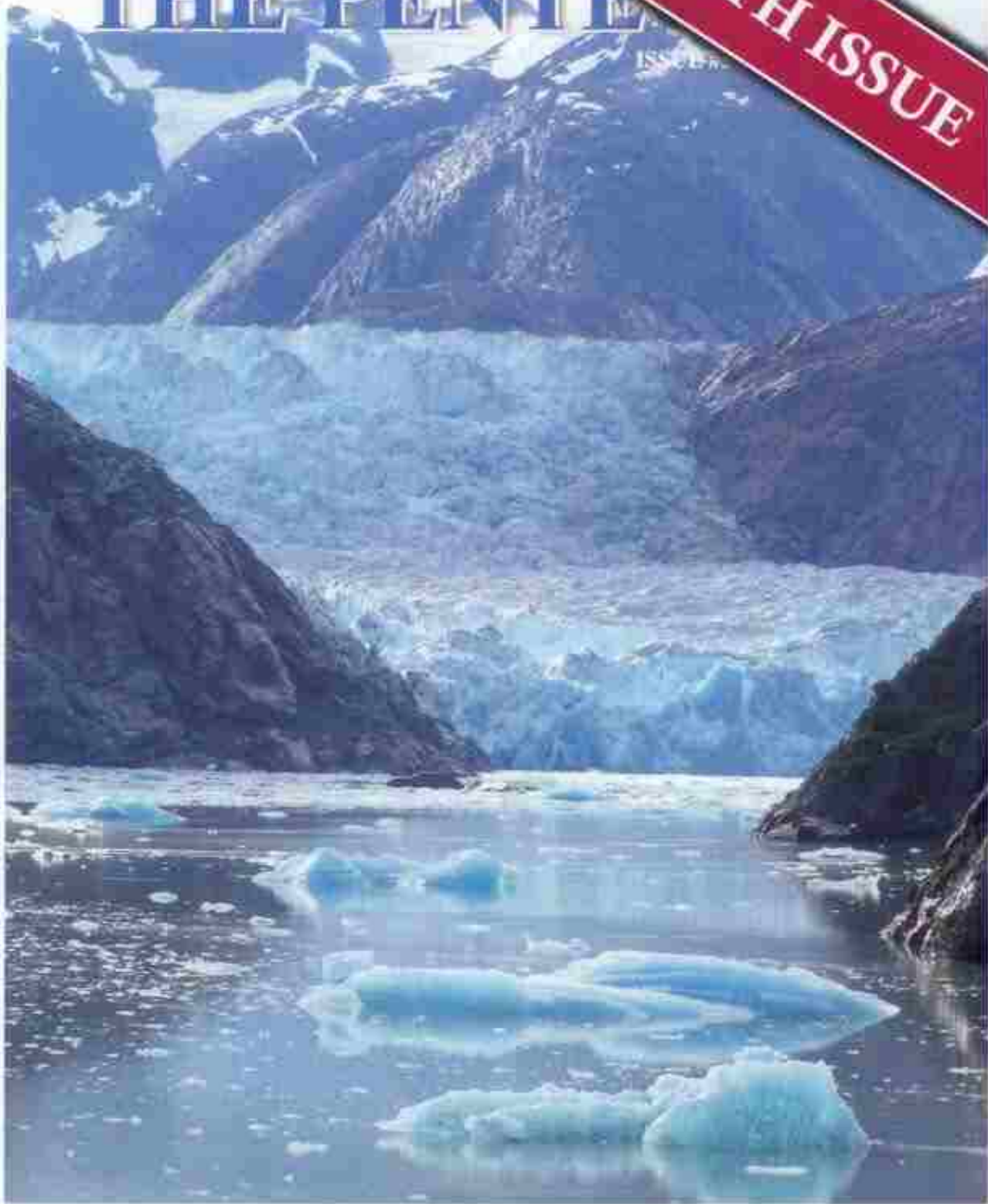


THE PENTAGON

50TH ISSUE





Hello, and welcome to the 50th issue of The Pentecost magazine. In this issue of January, 2011, we will look at the justice of God and how we as people should respond to Him. God bless you.

Shawn Stevens

There are many things that we want, desire and need in our lives. Yet, nothing, and no one, can satisfy like God. I hope that as you read your spiritual hunger is stirred up to know God, more and more.

Ramona Stevens

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Zion
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY
Shawn & Ramona Stevens

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 733,
Linden, WA 98264 USA

Email: info@zionchristianministry.com
ZionChristianMinistry.com

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The Justice of God and Holy Desperation

There are different kinds of justice in the world today. When people talk of commutative justice, they mean justice in business or commerce. When people speak of public justice, they are referring to governmental justice. When people refer to punitive justice, they are referring to the punishment of moral evil or sin.¹

The law of God, in the Bible, contains both precepts and penalties for transgressions from them, and is based on the holiness of God. There is appointed a day on which God will judge the world with holy justice. Scripture says; "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, 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). Even those who do not know God's Word have a conscience that was given to them by God. Their own conscience judges them as guilty. God's Word is written for all men and women to read; "He has told you, O man, what is good; ..." (Micah 6:8).

Many men and women have not given enough time and thought to this special day of judgment. Many do not even believe that it will occur. However, the Scripture is clear, God will judge the

world. How does a man or woman respond when they realize that they are a sinner who has broken God's law and are awaiting judgment? John Wesley describes it this way:

Here ends his pleasing dream, his delusive rest, his false peace, his vain security. His joy now vanishes as a cloud; pleasures, once loved, delight no more. They pall upon the taste: he loathes the nauseous sweet; he is weary to bear them. The shadows of happiness flee away, and sink into oblivion: so that he is stripped of all, and wanders to and fro, seeking rest, but finding none. The fumes of those opiates being now dispelled, he feels the anguish of a wounded spirit. He finds that sin let loose upon the soul (whether it be pride, anger, or evil desire, whether self-will, malice, envy, revenge, or any other) is perfect misery: he feels sorrow of heart for the blessings he has lost, and the curse which is come upon him; remorse for having thus destroyed himself, and despised his own mercies; fear, from a lively sense of the wrath of God, and of the consequences of His wrath, of the punishment which He has justly deserved, and which he sees hanging over his head; fear of death, as being to him the gate of hell, the entrance of death eternal; fear of the devil, the executioner of the wrath and righteous vengeance of God; fear of men, who, if they were able to kill his body, would thereby plunge both body and soul into hell, - fear, sometimes arising to such a height, that the poor, sinful, guilty soul is terrified with everything, with nothing, with shades, with a leaf shaken of the wind. Yea, sometimes it may even border upon distraction,

making a man 'drunken though not with wine,' suspending the exercise of the memory, of the understanding, of all the natural faculties. Sometimes it may approach to the very brink of despair; so that he who trembles at the name of death, may yet be ready to plunge into it every moment, to 'choose strangling rather than life.' Well may such a man roar, like him of old, for the very disquietness of his heart. Well may he cry out, 'The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities; but a wounded spirit who can bear?' 2

As the picture starts to become more and more clear concerning sin, eternal judgment and the holiness of God, it is inevitable that seeking souls will have a sense of urgency and alarm as they come to realize their standing before God. They begin to understand that there is a place reserved for them in both heaven and hell and that their choices determine which of these places they will occupy. Until they find salvation in Jesus Christ, they are on the downward spiraling path that eventually plummets into hell.

The Holy Spirit causes men and women to feel the weight of their sin and the fear of God's judgment, and begins to draw them to salvation. The weight of sin and judgment presses upon the human soul, causing it to look upward in search of release. The seeking soul must not only look upward, but also reach upward to take the hand of God, which has already been extended. God has extended His arm so that it is within man's reach. Looking and reaching for God is a part of hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Jesus said that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are blessed. The Bible

tells us; "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." (Matthew 5:6). They are blessed because they become filled. It is Christ's very own promise.

Jesus, while speaking to His disciples, spoke of gaining eternal life in this way; "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid *again*; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." (Matthew 13:44). The kingdom of heaven, or eternal life, is this great treasure hidden in the field. To get it you must lay down your life. That means to surrender your whole self to Jesus Christ and commit to follow Him for the rest of your life. Can you earn your salvation? No, you can not. You see, the treasure is worth far more than you can ever afford. It is worth the price of the field many, many times over. The only thing that could satisfy God's justice, in payment for the penalty of your sin and mine, is the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing you could ever do could equal this. You cannot afford the treasure. However, God has put the treasure in the field as a gift and you have found it there. You cannot afford the treasure, but you can afford the field, although it costs you everything you have. In the same way, God has paid the supreme price for your sin and mine, and He offers eternal life as a gift. However, we are required to repent and surrender our life to Jesus Christ, if we are to receive this gift. Dear reader, are you willing to surrender everything and receive God's gift of salvation? Do you hunger for it like a starving man? Do you thirst for it like a desert traveler without any water?

History records a mighty move of God that occurred on the Hebrides Islands of Scotland in 1949. Countless souls were saved and many lives were dramatically changed. This became known as the Hebrides Revival. It has been said of this revival:

In the parish of Uig 'all lorries and vans available were put into service to convey the people to the place of worship, yet many were forced to walk miles; but distance did not matter, and at any rate they knew that the meetings would continue: if they were not in time for the first, they would be sure of getting the second or the third. So they came across the moors and over the hills, young men and maidens, their torches flashing in the darkness, intent upon one thing, to get peace from a guilty conscience, and refuge from the storm in their bosom, in the shelter of the rock of ages.'³ These ones were intent on one thing, and that was to receive forgiveness and peace in their souls and to find this in Christ. With hearts and minds alert to their need of God, they could no longer be apathetic or careless about their souls. They could not neglect their inner need for a new heart. They could no longer slumber in complacency. They could no longer close their ears to God's warnings or His appeals of divine love.

Jesus, in Mark's Gospel, teaches:

... 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what

will a man give in exchange for his soul?

Mark 8:34-37

Dear reader, you may feel confident that you are a good person and that you are morally upright as you walk through this dark, sinful world. Your vices have been far exceeded by others around you in this cruel world. However, the scene is about to change. The day is coming when your soul will be required of you, and you will be ushered into the presence of angels and the high and holy presence of the Lord Jesus Himself. Your life will be reviewed. Did you have other gods before the Lord? Did you make God out to be whatever you wanted Him to be? Did you take His name in vain? Did you enter into His Sabbath rest? Did you honor your father and mother? Did you murder? Did you commit adultery? Did you steal? Did you bear false witness? Did you covet what was not yours? Did you come to God and find forgiveness for your sins. Your life will be reviewed by the holy God. The Bible warns us; "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (Hebrews 4:13).

Dear reader, your soul will be required of you. When the sole comes off of a shoe it can be glued back on, when the soul comes off of a man you cannot re-attach it. The Bible tells us; "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment," (Hebrews 9:27).

Two thousand years ago, Jesus came,

bringing with Him all the life, love and hope of heaven as a gift of grace to an undeserving world. Full of the light of God, Jesus was continually drawing multitudes to Himself, healing the sick and feeding the hungry. Living in perfect purity and innocence, Jesus taught the people the spiritual things of God's kingdom. However, a cross was being prepared, a place of shame and death, a place of torture and desertion. In one great act of love, God's mercy triumphed over judgment, and yet fulfilled His judgment, as Jesus Christ took our place on the cross. All the sins of humanity were laid upon Jesus, the Lamb of God. The weight of our sins tormented Him more than the crown of thorns, the whipping, or even the nails in His hands.

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.

Isaiah 53:7

He knew that we couldn't afford the treasure. It had to be put in the field as a gift, a gift bought by His own precious blood. We read further in the Book of Isaiah;

... He poured out Himself to death. And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.

Isaiah 53:12

This is the love of God. God's love can fill you and change you completely, if you surrender to Jesus in repentance and faith. By rising from the dead, Jesus threw the door of hope wide open and bids you to come in.

Are you hungry? Are you willing to surrender everything and gain forgiveness and acceptance with Jesus? Are you thirsty? If so, then hear God's voice in the Scripture; "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost." (Revelation 22:17).

Faith is expressed in prayer. Call out to Him now.

I would like to pray for you also:

Lord God, You are just and righteous in all Your ways. You, Oh God, have appointed a day on which You will judge the world. Your eye sees all. You are a just judge. You are also a God Who loves to show mercy to those who come to You in repentance and faith. I pray for this precious soul who is reading this tract. If they do not know you, draw them now. Help them to take Your hand. Your hand is already extended to them, but now they must choose to take it, or reject it. Let them see their need of You. Stir them to put off any apathy, complacency and carelessness concerning their souls. Let them hear both Your warnings and Your call of love. Lord Jesus, You came to this world and lived among men and women. You were innocent and yet You died for our sins. Then You rose from the dead. You are the Lamb of God. Now I pray for this one, who is reading

now, that You would help them to exercise faith. Help them make the choice to turn and repent. Help them to lay down their life to You. They can't afford the pearl of eternal life, but You have purchased it for them and put it in the field as a gift. They cannot buy the pearl, but they can buy the field. Help them to make the commitment to surrender all to You. Amen.

Shawn Stevens

ENDNOTES

1John Miley, D.D., LL.D., *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 11 (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), 139.

2John Wesley, *A Compend Of Wesley's Theology*, Robert W. Burtner, Ed., et al (New York: Abingdon Press), 152-153.

3Duncan Campbell, *The Lewis Awakening*, as cited by Michael L. Brown. *From Holy Laughter To Holy Fire, America On The Edge Of Revival* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 1996), 93-94.

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*Scripture quotations taken from the *New American Standard Bible*®.

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THE ART OF RAMONA STEVENS

Isaiah 29:6:

"You will be punished by the LORD of hosts:
With thunder and earthquake and great noise,
With storm and tempest And the flame of devouring fire."

This seems to refer to God's deliverance of Jerusalem by His judging of Assyria. In the same way as God powerfully delivered His people in times past, we, who are His children, can trust Him to do so today in our own lives.



This picture depicts how, when we believe in Jesus and decide to commit our lives to Him, we become a new creation as in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

The red egg cracking open represents our new life, as a believer, coming forth. The squiggly line represents our spirit, as it becomes alive in Christ. The yellow represents the glory of God, because He is glorified through this. The blue and white swirling below and above represents the Holy Spirit enacting and wooing us.

This picture is showing how, to God, there is no discrimination of color, race, age or sex. All are welcome, and when we are united in Him, it brings glory to His name. Therefore, the yellow light, which represents God's glory, is bursting forth through the darkness.



I AM

"I AM" is a name that God chose for Himself in Scripture. Exodus 3:14 reads: "And God said to Moses, I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you."¹ The Bible teaches that God was and always is.

The pictures around the words "I AM" are also representative of names of God: Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (see John 14:6); He lives in our hearts when we become God's children (see Galatians 4:6); He is King of kings (see 1 Timothy 6:15); Jesus was poured out as an offering by His death on the cross, and this is why we celebrate communion as Christmas (see Matthew 26:26-28); He is the light of the world (see John 8:12); He is true to His promises; the rainbow is a symbol of God's promise to Noah (see Genesis 9:14-15).

¹ Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

