



Send the Fire, O God

by Zelma Argue



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By ZELMA ARGUE / Costa Mesa, California

ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST "cloven tongues like as of fire" appeared and sat upon each of the Christian believers (Acts 2:3). This holy fire was a welcome sight—a sign from heaven to accompany the mighty inrush of God's presence and the blessed infilling of the Holy Ghost.

As we come to another Pentecost Sunday our prayer is, "Send the fire again, O God! Give us a fresh touch of that fire from heaven!" Though it be invisible, its effects are unmistakable.

The holy fire! Always it has come by sacrifice and by calling upon God. Always it has come in a time of pressure, of spiritual darkness, and of need.

Look through the Old Testament. Fire always falls upon sacrifice, though it comes by the mercy of God and not by human merit.

In the time of Israel's pressure by Pharaoh, God sent fire. "The Lord went before them . . . by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light. . . . He took not away . . . the pillar of fire by night" (Exodus 13:21, 22).

The people sinned by making and worshiping a molten calf—"yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day . . . neither the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way wherein they should go" (Nehemiah 9:19). It was in answer to

the anguished intercession of Moses, when he told God to blot his own name out of the book rather than desert His chosen people.

Later, in answer to the anguished cry of Elijah as he stood alone on Carmel facing 450 false prophets of Baal, the fire fell again.

After Malachi, there was no voice from above, no fresh fire for over 400 years. Then John the Baptist appeared and began to preach about the One who was about to come and bring back the holy fire. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," he declared (Matthew 3:11).

That blessed fire came, as promised, on the Day of Pentecost. What was the result? Peter, who formerly had denied his Lord, now became courageous, preaching the Word with all boldness. His hearers were pierced to the heart and cried, "What must we do to be saved?"

When the fire came, the church stood in great unity. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul . . . and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:32, 33).

When the fire came, the spirit of giving was stirred up (Acts 4:32, 37). This is true wherever there is a Holy Ghost revival.

When the fire came, miracles of healing occurred (Acts 3:1-10). They still occur when Pentecost is in action!

When the fire came, courage was inspired. Though the one healing of the lame man drew bitter persecution down upon their heads, they did not pray, "Lord, lessen the power," but rather prayed, "Lord, [stretch] forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus" (Acts 4:30).

When the fire came, unbelievers and rejectors were judged. Herod, who had mocked, was eaten by worms. Ananias and Sapphira, who kept back part of the price, were carried out lifeless.

When the fire fell, Christ was revealed, as when Saul of Tarsus saw the light on the road to Damascus and cried, "Who art thou, Lord?" (Acts 9:5).

When the fire fell, a martyr's crown was won by Stephen. His face shown with the light of another world. They had given him tables to serve, but God had a bigger job for him than tables. He was full of faith and power and wrought miracles and wonders among the people (Acts 6:8). Jealousy was aroused. False witnesses were called in. He was stoned for his boldness in witnessing. But Paul was to pick up the torch his hands let fall and carry it to the ends of the then known earth.

When the fire fell, missionaries were sent forth, after fasting and prayer, as directed by the Holy Ghost (Acts 13). Strange miracles of salvation occurred in unexpected places, as the Ethiopian eunuch who was saved while riding in his chariot (Acts 8:37).

When the fire fell, the space of one generation of thirty-odd years was given to get the message out. Then judgment fell and Jerusalem was destroyed, over a million lives being lost in the siege.

Judgment is about to fall again, but on a worldwide scale. We may not have much time left to get the message out. O God, send a fresh touch of holy fire upon us today, we pray!