

HOLY CONVOICATIONS



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“ADONAI said to Moshe, “Tell the people of Isra’el: ‘The designated times of ADONAI which you are to proclaim as holy convocations are my designated times.” (Leviticus 23:1)

שַׁבּוֹת Shavu’ot - The Festival of Weeks

“Observe the festival of *Shavu’ot* with the first-gathered produce of the wheat harvest....” (Exodus 34:22)

“From the day after the day of rest—that is, from the day you bring the sheaf for waving—you are to count seven full weeks, until the day after the seventh week; you are to count fifty days; and then you are to present a new grain offering to ADONAI.” (Leviticus 23:15-16)

“The festival of *Shavu’ot* arrived, and the believers all gathered together in one place. Suddenly there came....” (Acts 2:1, 2a)

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**2016 Update: This commentary is going to discuss the timing issues surrounding the Passion chronology of the week of Yeshua's death and resurrection. For years I asserted that Yeshua most likely died on the very same day as when the lambs were being sacrificed at the Temple, viz, on Nisan the 14th, which I was figuring was a Friday. This put his Seder meal on the prior evening—the sunset of the 13th as it became the 14th, eaten of course without meat from the sacrificial lambs. In this way, technically I had Yeshua keeping his Seder (I assumed it was a Chagigah) on the 14th while being able to die 21 or so hours later on the day part of the 14th as well. However, after careful research, and as an update to my own understanding of the chronology of the week of Passover in which Yeshua was crucified, I have now come to understand that Yeshua was most likely crucified on Nisan the 15th, which as far as I can reckon, would still have been on a Friday as I maintained earlier. This means he ate the Pesach meal with meat from lambs slaughtered the day before on Nisan the 14th—a Thursday. Essentially, I now hold to Yeshua being crucified on Chag HaMatzah—the Day of Unleavened Bread. So in conclusion, I still hold to a conjunction-like occurrence of Nisan 14, 15, and 16 all being back to back (i.e., Thursday, Friday, Saturday), with no days skipped in between. The only major changes to my timetable are that I now hold to Yeshua eating his Seder on Thursday the 14th (previously I thought the 14th was a Friday), and being crucified on Friday the 15th (previously I had the Seder and the crucifixion both on Friday, the “Chagigah” Seder being on the evening part of the 14th and his death during the afternoon some 21 or so hours later, viz, the day part of the 14th). I hope this updated clarification does not cause too much confusion when following this commentary.*

The Torah is full of wonderful, spiritual principles that are learned through everyday experiences. In his infinite wisdom, HaShem (God) knew that frail man was likely to forget many of these important spiritual principles, which the teachings of the Torah freely offered to him; teachings designed to bless and help him in his everyday walk with his Creator. That is why the Holy One, blessed be He, carefully designed the Biblical Calendar—maintained by the Jewish People—to remind mankind of his place in history, and to prompt him, to ever press closer in his relationship with his Heavenly Father. Why, even the heavens and the earth themselves would serve as witnesses to remind him of the special place that he has in HaShem's heart (Jeremiah 31:35-37). Because ancient Isra'el was, and in many respects still is, primarily an agriculturally active piece of real estate, what better way for the Holy One to teach his children about his holy nature than through their annual harvest responsibilities? As we shall see, the festival known as **Shavu'ot** (say “shah-voo-ote”) holds significant messianic truths that are pertinent to every believer today.

The Hebrew word for week is “*shavuah*,” its plural is “*shavu'ot*.” Both of these words come from the root word for “seven.” This is where the festival gets its name. ***Shavu'ot*** is the annual counting of seven weeks of days, hence forty-nine days. This yearly count is listed in the Torah as a *mitzvah*, a command from HaShem himself. The name “**Pentecost**,” from the Greek word “*pentekoste*,” means “fifty days,” as the Torah instructed *Am Yisra'el* (the people of Isra'el) to add the final day after the seventh week. This festival is also known by a few other names, but we will primarily use ***Shavu'ot*** for this study.

“Not Skipping a Beat”

To create a seamless transition from Pesach to Pentecost—just as the Torah intended—I have decided to pick up the discussion about the timing of the Counting of the Omer from my Omer Reisheet commentary. Many bible readers may not realize that HaShem intended Pesach to lead to Unleavened Bread to lead to Omer Reisheet to lead to Shavu'ot. As we shall read later on into my commentary, Shavu'ot commemorates both the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai as well as the pouring out of the Ruach HaKodesh—the Holy Spirit. Thus we see that the Torah is teaching us that justification (deliverance from sin as typified by the exodus from Egypt) is inextricably linked to sanctification (giving of the Torah and the Spirit as typified by Pentecost fifty days later). In my commentary to Omer Reisheet, in a paragraph titled ‘Issues Surrounding the “Timing” of Omer Reisheet,’ we read the following:

Some readers will readily note that history has been generally “unkind” to this particular festival. What do I mean by “unkind”? I mean to draw your attention to the fact that no less than three prominent Jewish sects have come to interpret the timing associated with the start of this count in at least three respective, but differing ways...So, which view is correct and how does it impact you the reader? Depending on which view you go with, the impact will determine the date you celebrate Shavu'ot fifty days later!¹

For the sake of clarification and, more importantly, a request for “unity within diversity” on the issue, Hegg makes these pertinent remarks in a recent commentary to Counting the Omer:

While it is possible that some of the early Messianic communities the Sadducean calendar and thus began counting the omer on the day following the weekly Sabbath rather than the day following the Festival Sabbath, there is no clear evidence to prove that such occurred. Yet if such a possibility must be allowed, we must be willing to allow variation in our own Messianic movement without causing dissension. In our own communities, the method of counting the omer determined by the leadership should be followed by the community without making the issue a point of contention or division.²

As we saw in my Omer Reisheet commentary we concluded that the Pharisaic view was most likely the more historically accurate of the competing calendars in use during the

¹ Ariel ben-Lyman HaNaviy, *Omer Reisheet*, (Tetze Torah Ministries, 2007), p. 2.

² Tim Hegg, *Counting the Omer* (TorahResource.com, 2002, 2009), p. 16

1st century and as a result the majority of ancient Judaism would expectedly have been on the same sheet of music when Shavu'ot rolled around seven weeks after Pesach. Considering the very likely spiritual reality that the particular Pesach and Shavu'ot the year Yeshua died were two of the most significant holy days in Isra'el's history, I think it rather "ironic" of HaShem to have the two major views (the Pharisees and the Sadducees) lining up perfectly that year, according to our modest findings!

Two Significant Scriptural Shavu'ots?

Historically, the rabbis figure the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai to have occurred on this day, that is, in the third month after *Am Yisra'el* came out of Egypt. Actually, the exact date of this familiar encounter, recorded for us in the book of Exodus, is not explicitly stated; the chronological evidence is convincing, however. At any rate, the author of the book of Acts does testify of the precise timing of the festival of **Shavu'ot**, and he specifically relates this festival to the pouring out of the *Ruach HaKodesh*, that is, the Holy Spirit, unto the believers gathered there in Jerusalem.

Matan Torah (Giving of the Torah)

Rav Menachem Leibtag challenges us, "Ask any observant Jew, and he will tell you that Shavu'ot commemorates Matan Torah, just as Pesach commemorates Yetziat Mitzrayim (Departure from Egypt). Nevertheless, according to Torah, it appears that Shavu'ot is only an agricultural holiday, with no connection at all to 'Matan Torah'! How could it be that the Torah 'neglects' the primary reason for Shavu'ot?"³ The insights of [Ohr Somayach International](http://www.vbm-torah.org/shavuot/shavuot4.htm), as prepared by Rabbi G. Rubin will help us to unravel this mystery...

The chain of events surrounding the giving of the Torah is very difficult to follow, because, according to Rashi's understanding, the verses are not arranged chronologically, and a number of jumps must be made in order to reconstruct the sequence of events. The difficulties begin with the fifth aliya of Yisro (the sequence of events surrounding Yisro himself is a separate issue), and continue until the end of Ki Siso.

The following outline should help to understand the order of events:

1. On Rosh Chodesh Sivan the Jews arrive at the wilderness of Sinai. (19:1; cf. Rashi).
2. Early the following morning, the 2nd of Sivan, Moshe goes up Mt. Sinai for the first time. He is instructed to offer the Jews the opportunity of accepting the Torah, and of becoming a holy people. (19:3-6).
3. That same day Moshe descends and assembles the elders and passes on the message. The entire people respond in unison that whatever HaShem says, they will do. (19:7-8).

³ <http://www.vbm-torah.org/shavuot/shavuot4.htm>

4. On the morning of the 3rd of Sivan Moshe again ascends the mountain to bring the people's response to HaShem. (19:8; cf. Rashi).
5. On this occasion he is told that on the day of Matan Torah HaShem will speak to him (i.e. to Moshe alone) from the midst of a thick cloud. The people will bear witness to this event, and this will establish the authenticity of Moshe's prophecy forever. (19:9; according to Lavush Ora, but see Gur Aryeh for a different understanding).
6. `Moshe's descent, as well as his subsequent conversation with the people is not described in the verses, but is inferred by Rashi from HaShem's response in verse 10 (see paragraph 8 below). The people seem to have protested against hearing Matan Torah second hand from Moshe, and insisted on hearing it from HaShem directly. (Rashi 19:9).
7. On the 4th of Sivan Moshe returns to the mountain to bring the people's request to HaShem. (The latter half of 19:9).
8. During this same encounter, HaShem informs Moshe that if the people insist on hearing for themselves, they must purify themselves on the 4th and 5th in order to receive the Torah on the 6th. In addition, Moshe is to instruct the people how close they may approach the mountain during the revelation, and for how long the restriction is to last. (19:10-13; cf. Rashi).
9. This is the same conversation with HaShem that is mentioned in Parashas Mishpatim (24:1-2; cf. Rashi ad loc), where Moshe is told that he, Aharon, Nadav, Avihu, and the elders are all to ascend on the day of the revelation, but that only Moshe will approach the cloud.
10. Still on the 4th of Sivan, Moshe descends, and informs the people of the command to purify themselves on these days. According to Rabbi Yose, Moshe interpreted days mentioned in paragraph 8 as two complete days in addition to the 4th, the delaying Matan Torah until the 7th of Sivan. (19:14-15; cf. Rashi and Shabbos 87a).
11. This is the same conversation with the people described in Mishpatim, when Moshe reminds the people of the Seven Noachide Laws, and the laws received at Mara. The people agree to keep all of HaShem's commandments. Moshe writes down all of the Torah from Bereishis until this point. (24:3-4; cf. Rashi).
12. On the 5th of Sivan Moshe builds an altar at the base of the mountain. Offerings are made. Moshe reads the book he has written to the people, who respond, "We will do and we will hear." The blood of the sacrifices is sprinkled on the altar on behalf of the people. (24:4-8; Rashi ad loc. and cf. Rashi 19:11).
13. On the 6th of Sivan, or the 7th according to Rabbi Yose, Moshe leads the people to the base of the mountain. We are informed, parenthetically, that during Matan Torah the people are destined to hear only two commandments directly. As for the others, Moshe will speak and HaShem will amplify his voice. (19:16-19; Rashi).
14. HaShem reveals his throne upon the mountain and summons Moshe. Moshe is told to warn the people again not to approach the mountain. Moshe protests that the people have already been warned. HaShem tells him that he must do so nevertheless. Then he

is to return to the mountain. Aharon and the first born, who are the priests at this point, are to approach, each according to his level. (19:20-24; Rashi).

15. Moshe descends and passes on the information. (19:25).

16. Moshe's return to the mountain, together with Aharon, Nadav, Avihu and the elders, is described in Mishpatim (24:9). This is the ascent foretold above, paragraph 9. During Matan Torah, Nadav, Avihu and the elders gaze inappropriately. Their punishment is postponed until another occasion, in order not to detract from Matan Torah. (24:10-11; Rashi).

17. Matan Torah itself, the pronouncement of the 10 Statements, is in Yisro. All of the 10 were said in a single word, then HaShem repeated and explained each one individually. (20:1-14; Rashi).

18. The people heard the first two explained, but then were overwhelmed and requested that Moshe hear the rest and relay them to the people. (20:15-17; Rashi ad loc. and cf. Rashi 19:19).

19. At this point the people back off. Moshe alone enters into the thick cloud (20:18), just as HaShem had said would happen (see paragraph 5). (Moshe's descent after hearing the 10 Statements is not described in the text).

20. After Matan Torah, Moshe is commanded to approach HaShem, and to remain with him to receive the stone tablets. Moshe ascends, accompanied part way by his disciple, Yehoshua. Aharon and Chur are left in charge. (24:12-14).

21. At this point, six days are mentioned, during which the cloud is present on the mountain, before Moshe is invited to enter. Rashi brings two opinions: a) These are the previous six days, the seventh being the day the 10 Statements were pronounced, after which he is invited to enter the cloud. Or b) These Six days begin after Matan Torah, and comprise the first six days out of the forty. (24:15-18; Rashi).

22. This ascent takes place on the 7th of Sivan. (Rashi 32:1). Moshe remains on the mountain for 40 days and nights. (24:18).

23. During these 40 days Moshe receives the laws commanded at the end of Yisro and the bulk of Mishpatim. (20:19 until 23:33; see Rashi on 31:18).

24. The end of the 40 days is described in Ki Sisa. When he is finished speaking, HaShem gives Moshe the tablets. (31:18).

25. On the 16th of Tammuz the people come to the mistaken conclusion that Moshe is overdue. The Golden Calf is made. Aharon declares a festival to HaShem for the next day. (32:1-5; Rashi).

26. They get up early on the morning of the 17th of Tammuz to worship the Calf (32:6).

27. HaShem tells Moshe to descend because of the Calf. Moshe descends. When he sees the Calf he casts down the tablets and breaks them. He grinds up the Calf and makes the people drink it. The Levites are ordered to kill the idolaters. (32:7-29).

28. On the 18th of Tammuz Moshe ascends the mountain to seek atonement for the people (according to Rashi, Shemos 18:13 and Devarim 9:18, although in Shemos 33:11 he says that Moshe came down on the 17th of Tammuz, burnt the Calf on the 18th and went back up on the 19th, see Gur Aryeh for an explanation). HaShem tells Moshe that from now on the Shechina will not be with them. (Shemos 32:31 until 33:3)

29. Moshe descends on the 29th of Av (Rashi, Devarim 9:18). He informs the people that the Shechina will not be with them. The people mourn. (Shemos 33:4-6, Rashi).

30. We are informed that from the time of the sin of the Calf, Moshe has moved his tent out of the camp (33:7-11). There in his tent Moshe now pleads with HaShem that the Shechina should go with them. HaShem agrees. Moshe asks to see HaShem's glory, and HaShem agrees. Moshe is instructed to carve two new tablets, and to prepare to return to the mountain the next morning. (33:12 until 34:3).

31. On Rosh Chodesh Elul Moshe once more ascends the mountain. (Rashi Shemos 33:11 and Devarim 9:18) He is instructed in the 13 Attributes of Mercy, and warned that we must not make covenants with the Canaanites, but we must shatter their altars. (34:4-17)

32. Rashi informs us that during this third period on the mountain the building of the tabernacle was commanded (Rashi 31:18), but he does not specify at what point. Perhaps he would place parshios Truma, Tetzavei and the beginning of Ki Sisa (25:1 until 31:17), between 34:17 and 34:18. Thus the discussion of what to do to the Canaanite altars (leading up to 34:17) would be followed by the instructions for making a tabernacle and altar for HaShem. And the discussion of Shabbos in verses 31:12-17, would be followed by the discussion of the festivals (the usual association), 34:18-26.

33. In verse 34:27 Moshe is informed which parts of the Torah may be written down and which may not (Rashi). He remains on the mountain for forty days and nights, as he did before, by the end of which HaShem has rewritten the Ten Commandments on the tablets that Moshe has carved (see Rashi to 34:1). He descends with the second tablets on Yom Kippur, his face glowing with "rays of splendor." (34:29-35; Rashi).⁴

In the end it is Rav Menachem Leibtag of Yeshivat Har Etzion Alon Shvut, Isra'el, one of my personal favorites among contemporary rabbis, whom I will quote for an answer to the question posed above:

In the Torah, we find numerous mitzvot (commandments) through which we commemorate Yetziat Mitzraim, both on the ANNIVERSARY of the Exodus: e.g. eating matzah, telling of the story of Yetziat Mitzraim, korban Pesach etc.; and even ALL YEAR ROUND: e.g. "mitzvat bikkurim" (bringing the first fruits to Yerushalayim), tfillin, shabbat, and the daily recital of "kriyat shma," etc., all of which the Torah relates to the Exodus (i.e. "zecher l'yitziat mitzrayim").

In contrast, the Torah's approach to Ma'amad Har Sinai is totally different. Nowhere in Chumash do we find a specific mitzvah whose purpose is to commemorate this event.

⁴ <http://www.ohr.edu/>

[Sefer Dvarim does require that we not forget the events that transpired at Har Sinai (see 4:9-16), but that requirement is related to the prohibition to make any image of God. / See Hasagot HaRamban to Sefer HaMitzvot of the Rambam- Lo Ta'aseh #2.]

Furthermore, the Torah does not even tell us the precise day on which Matan Torah took place. While the precise day (and even time of day) of the Exodus is mentioned numerous times, Chumash never reveals the precise day on which Matan Torah took place. We are only informed that Bnei Yisrael arrived at Har Sinai in the third month:

"In the third month of Bnei Yisrael's departure from the land of Egypt, ON THIS DAY, they came to Midbar Sinai." (19:1)

Not only is the phrase "on this day" ambiguous, it is quite difficult to determine how many days actually transpire between their arrival at Har Sinai and Matan Torah (see Shmot 19:3-16 & B.T. Shabbat 86b). Thus, even if we assume (see Rashi 19:1- "b'yom hazeh") that Bnei Yisrael arrived on the first day of the month, the lack of a clear chronology in the subsequent events still makes it impossible to pinpoint that date.

Why does the Torah PURPOSELY obscure the date of Matan Torah? Why does it not leave us with any specific mitzvah to commemorate that event?

The Torah's implicit message may be that Matan Torah is not an historically bound event. EVERY DAY we must feel as though the Torah was given TODAY. This concept is reflected in the Midrash:

"... it should have been written: 'ON THAT DAY'. Why does the pasuk say: 'ON THIS DAY'? This comes to teach us that the words of the Torah should be considered new to you – as though they were given TODAY!" (quoted by Rashi Shmot 19:1)

Every generation must feel that it has entered into a covenant with God (see Dvarim 5:1-3). Every generation must feel that God's words were spoken to them no less than to earlier generations. To celebrate the anniversary of Matan Torah as a single moment in our history would diminish from that meta-historical dimension.⁵

Shavu'ot in the New Testament: Round Two

According to the Scriptural account in the Apostolic Scriptures/*B'rit Chadashah* (New Covenant, a.k.a., New Testament), HaShem allowed his Spirit to be experienced by all of the believers, as well as by the other men gathered there. The result was the disciples' ability to speak in languages not yet personally learned. To be sure, the text says that Jews from every nation under heaven heard in their respective language, the Good News! This was amazing indeed! In fact, Kefa (Peter) had to defend their state of sobriety, as they were accused of being drunk so early in the morning! Were they indeed drunk? Yes, drunk in the Spirit! Tongues of fire and the sound of a violent wind also accompanied this magnificent display of the Spirit's power. Actually, the Hebrew word for "spirit," "breath," and "wind" are all the same—*ruach*! Some believers today

⁵ <http://www.vbm-torah.org/shavuot/shavuot4.htm>

refer to this record as the birth of the Church although I do not hold to such a view personally.

Now the display of the tongues of fire and the presence of great sounds is reminiscent of the Sinai encounter. The rabbis also teach that when HaShem presented the Torah to the people, that it went forth in a multiple of fiery substance, inviting each individual Jew to accept the command to follow the whole of the Torah. The account in Acts describes the tongues of fire alighting themselves upon each person. In the Sinai delivery of the Torah, the account says "thunders and lightnings..." (KJV). The actual Hebrew word rendered thunders is "voices"! This strengthens the connection to the Acts account, with voices being heard. But how does this festival teach us some spiritual importance that we should not forget?

The Ruach HaKodesh – The Power to Live a Changed Life!

A reader of mine sent in the following question. I have used his question and my answers to develop the remainder of this commentary.

Question 1:

What does it really mean to be baptized in Holy Spirit? Is there really a second experience, even though I have been taught in church there is one I can't justify it by scripture as I think it has more to do with unity and membership within the believing community. What exactly is the "in" vs. "on" debate about anyhow?

Answer to Question 1:

First allow me to quote our (Kehilat T'nuvah's) core Statement of Beliefs:

BAPTISM IN THE RUACH HAKODESH (HOLY SPIRIT) - We believe by perfect faith that the Holy One, Blessed be He, desires that all of his children appropriate and internalize the power and fullness of his gracious Spirit. The Baptism in the Ruach HaKodesh and fire is a gift from HaShem as promised by Yeshua the Messiah to all believers and is received subsequent to the New Birth (Matt. 3:11; John 14:16, 17; Acts 1:8; 2:38, 39). The gift of tongues is but one of the many manifestations of the Ruach HaKodesh (Acts 2:4; 19:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:1-13; ch. 14). We believe in the operation of all of the gifts of the Ruach HaKodesh as enumerated in HaShem's Word. We embrace the complete ministry of the Ruach HaKodesh (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12:1-13).

The very first mention of the Ruach in the Torah is in Genesis 1:2

וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם
 "...v'Ruach-Elohim m'rachefet al-paney ha-mayim"
 (...and the Spirit of God hovered over the surface of the water)

Along with this reference, the Ruach is also mentioned in quite a few other surprising locations in the entire TaNaKH (Old Testament). Some rather familiar references are found in the story of Shimshon (Samson), where we learn that he enjoyed a special anointing from the Ruach (read Judges 13:24-14:20). In these verses the Ruach is described as "coming upon him powerfully." But was the Ruach within him? I've heard it taught that the Ruach did not enter into men until the New Covenant. However, concerning the construction of the Mishkan, B'tzal'el, the master craftsman, is said to have been "filled with the spirit of God..."⁶ according to the 1917 JPS translation of the TaNaKH.

The confusion stirred up within the debate of "IN" vs. "ON," that is, a teaching which purports that "in the Old Testament the Spirit merely resided upon (on) folks, while in the New Testament the Spirit resides within (in) a person" firstly seems to ignore the fact that Scripture teaches us plainly that regeneration of a man cannot take place without the Ruach HaKodesh! Observe the language of this pasuk from Sha'ul:

1 But, brothers, I do not want you to go on being ignorant about the things of the Spirit. 2 You know that when you were pagans, no matter how you felt you were being led, you were being led astray to idols, which can't speak at all. 3 Therefore, I want to make it clear to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says, "Yeshua is cursed!" and no one can say, "Yeshua is Lord," except by the Ruach HaKodesh. (1 Cor. 12:1-3)

Verse one seems as relevant today as it was back then! We believers seem to be ignorant concerning the work of the Spirit and as a result go about bickering and arguing about topics such as "IN" vs. "ON." Sha'ul's wish is that with the help of the unified Word of HaShem and the witness of the genuine indwelling Spirit we should all come to the unifying knowledge that God has graciously granted unto us, as demonstrated by sending us gifted individuals capable of disseminating genuine Truth to the Body:

12 Their task is to equip God's people for the work of service that builds the body of the Messiah, 13 until we all arrive at the unity implied by trusting and knowing the Son of God, at full manhood, at the standard of maturity set by the Messiah's perfection. 14 We will then no longer be infants tossed about by the waves and blown along by every wind of teaching, at the mercy of people clever in devising ways to deceive. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in every respect grow up into him who is the head, the Messiah. 16 Under his control, the whole body is being fitted and held together by the support of every joint, with each part working to fulfill its function; this is how the body grows and builds itself up in love. (Eph. 4:12-16)

What is it about the Spirit that will unite us as believers? Simply and foundationally that: only the Spirit can regenerate a man so as to cause him to declare Jesus as LORD! Verse two of our Corinthians passage above contrasts our former blindness and ignorance as "pagans being led by other than holy spirits" with now being led by the one

⁶ The Hebrew of Exodus 35:31 reads, "... וַיִּמְלֵא אֶת־רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים "

and only Holy Spirit. The Greek word *ethnos* ἔθνη, often rendered as “Gentiles,” “pagans” must be understood within each individual context presented. Here it connotes a foreigner from the nations devoid of true knowledge and worship of HaShem, i.e., a pagan. Compare this now with the reality that we have in Messiah, viz, brought to life along with him through the gift of the Spirit. In this sense, we are no longer “pagans.” Did we come to this revelation on our own? No. Regeneration is accomplished solely by the divine fiat of God. Man is incapable of calling God “Abba” without becoming “born again” first (cf. all of Romans chapter eight, but specifically verses 14-17). The second clause of verse three of our Corinthian passage confirms this reality. That the second clause is perhaps a lesson in ontology⁷ is also a possibility, one that I will not explore in this particular study.

What have we learned thus far? Simply that a person must experience the genuine regeneration from the Spirit in order to be genuinely saved. This truth is fundamentally applicable from Adam to today! No man approaches the Father except through Yeshua, and no man may come unless the Father draws him (see John 6:30-71 where the primary discussion is eternal life offered exclusively through Yeshua)!

Now let us turn to a discussion on Yeshua’s promise of the Spirit in Acts chapter one:

6 When they were together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore self-rule to Isra'el?" 7 He answered, "You don't need to know the dates or the times; the Father has kept these under his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Ruach HaKodesh comes upon you; you will be my witnesses both in Yerushalayim and in all Y'hudah and Shomron, indeed to the ends of the earth!" (Acts 1:6-8)

Amazingly, we find a “New Testament” passage utilizing the word “upon” instead of “in.” The Greek word for “upon” above is *epi* ἐπί and it’s primary meaning is in fact “upon.”⁸ In fact, this word is never translated as “in” anywhere that I can find in the Apostolic Scriptures! Clearly the work of the Spirit in these verses refers to taking the Gospel message beyond the confines of the city limits, into the foreign mission field of the non-Jews, something “unthinkable” for the ethnocentric Jewish 1st century Judaisms. The Jewish core of the talmidim needed the empowering of the Ruach HaKodesh if they were going to overcome the social barriers created by the prevailing rabbinic halakhah that sought to separate Jew from non-Jew. Acts chapter two, which cites Joel 3:1-5 (2:28-32), is proof positive that God was using Jewish believers to reach out to non-Jewish peoples everywhere.

Another passage in the Apostolic Scriptures that uses the language of “on” where we would think it should read “in” is 1 Peter 4:12-16:

⁷ The Oxford American Dictionary defines *ontology* as, “the branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being.”

⁸ According to Thayer’s and Smith’s Bible Dictionary (TSBD) ἐπί also means “on, at, by, before, over, against, to, across.”

12 Dear friends, don't regard as strange the fiery ordeal occurring among you to test you, as if something extraordinary were happening to you. 13 Rather, to the extent that you share the fellowship of the Messiah's sufferings, rejoice; so that you will rejoice even more when his Sh'khinah is revealed. 14 If you are being insulted because you bear the name of the Messiah, how blessed you are! For the Spirit of the Sh'khinah, that is, the Spirit of God, is resting on you! 15 Let none of you suffer for being a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or a meddler in other people's affairs. 16 But if anyone suffers for being Messianic, let him not be ashamed; but let him bring glory to God by the way he bears this name.

Again, the Greek word for “on” in verse 14 is *epi ἐπί*. Context again shows that an already genuine believer is receiving subsequent empowering to withstand the trails that come as a result of bearing the name of Yeshua in the first place! Verse fourteen clearly shows the proper order in which to understand the “IN” vs. “ON” debate, namely, the Spirit saves an individual and then the Spirit subsequently empowers such an individual to witness for Yeshua.

What then is the “work of the Spirit” taught throughout the Apostolic Scriptures? Simply the subsequent empowering of an already saved individual to do things that he normally could not do under his own power. The crucial key to unlocking the debate over “IN” vs. “ON” is knowing that the Ruach HaKodesh firstly works “IN” us to bring about regeneration and then works “ON” us to bring about empowerment to do the Will of God. I personally think we should change our language from “IN” vs. “ON” to a more accurate depiction of “IN” as well as “ON.” The Spirit saves and the Spirit empowers! Why can't we grasp these two important biblical truths simultaneously? The “Old Testament saints” were saved exactly the same way as we in the 21st century are saved: by grace, through faith in the gift of God, namely, the Son of God and the Spirit of God within us.

Yet, in a very real way, the presence and ministry of the Ruach HaKodesh, as we know him today, according to the times of the TaNaKH, would not be fully realized until the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Yeshua (read entire chapter of John 14, specifically vv. 16-18, 26). Of this ministry and individual power of the Spirit, Ezekiel prophesied about in 11:19, 20 and 36:25-29. Again, this is also the same individual “spirit” spoken about in Joel 2:28, 29, which is confirmed by Peter in Acts 2:16-18. The Ruach HaKodesh was indeed present in the days of the TaNaKH, empowering individuals such as B'tzal'el and Shimshon, yet his ministry was slightly different than that of today because of his unique role in what happened after Acts chapter two. Perhaps it is best to think of his ministry in the TaNaKH as “less expansive” than as compared to today. “Less expansive” is not to be equated with “non-existent.” A survey of the passages and wording used in “both testaments” will show that the “Old” does not exclusively employ a “ON” reading as ostensibly compared to an exclusive “IN” reading in the “New.” Rather, a survey of the passages and wording used in “both testaments” will demonstrate “ON” and “IN” being utilized interchangeably to teach that the Ruach HaKodesh both saves (“IN”) and empowers (“ON”), and that he does so consistently with the eternal plans and purposes of God the Father.

Controlled by Messiah

*These next two sections have been adapted from 'Transferable Concepts,' a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ.⁹

To be filled with the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) is to be filled with Messiah (Christ). The Ruach HaKodesh came to glorify Messiah. Therefore, if I am filled with the Spirit, I am abiding in Messiah. I am walking in the light as he is the light, and the blood of Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) will cleanse and keep on cleansing me from all unrighteousness. I am controlled by Messiah because the word "filling" means to be controlled. And if I am controlled - not as a robot but as one who is led and empowered by the Spirit - the LORD Yeshua will walk around in my body, as it were, and live his resurrection life in and through me.

This amazing fact, that Messiah lives in you and expresses his love through you, is one of the most important truths in the Torah. The standards of the Torah life seem so high and so impossible to achieve at times. To be sure, with our carnal flesh we cannot please God by attempting to follow Torah. The Torah will always remind us of how short we fall if we submit to it in the flesh. But if we walk in the Spirit then we will walk in the Power and Life of the Messiah himself! It is the life of Yeshua living through us that enables us to keep the Torah as it was meant to be kept. Does the Torah expect us to be sinless? Of course not. The Torah anticipates our shortcomings and graciously makes provision for them. To be Torah submissive, to be led by the Spirit, is to avail ourselves of the sinless sacrifice of the Spotless Lamb. Only this sacrifice can remove the stain of sin in our hearts. Only one man was sinless. That man was Yeshua of Natzeret. Now, through his indwelling presence, he wants to enable all that place their trust in him to live this same supernatural life. If you are willing for Yeshua the Messiah to live his resurrection life in and through you, you will bear spiritual fruit as naturally as a healthy vine will bear an abundance of fruit.

Yeshua said, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." You can be a great preacher, a Christian scholar, a deacon or elder, attend church meetings daily, live a clean, moral life, memorize hundreds of verses of Scripture, direct a church choir, and teach Sunday school, but if you are not bearing fruit in the sense that you are drawing others to Messiah, you are not filled and controlled by the Ruach HaKodesh according to the Torah.

Some people say, "I witness for Messiah by living a good life." But it is not enough to live a good life. Many non-believers live fine, moral, ethical lives. According to the LORD Yeshua, the only way to demonstrate that you are truly following Him is to produce fruit, which includes introducing others to our Savior as well as living holy lives. And the only way you can produce fruit is through the power of the Ruach HaKodesh.

I attended Liberty University in the '80's. I asked one of the leading theologians of our time, the dean of faculty for a famous theological seminary, if he felt that one could be a Spirit-filled person with out sharing Messiah as a way of life. His answer was an

⁹ <http://www.transferableconcepts.com/transconcepts/english/spirit/mean.html>

emphatic, "No!" On what basis could he make such a strong statement? The answer is obvious. Our Savior came to "seek and to save the lost," and he has "chosen and ordained" you to share the good news of his love and forgiveness with everyone, everywhere. To fail to witness for Messiah with your lips is to disobey this command just as much as to fail to witness for him by living a holy life is to disobey his command. In neither case can the disobedient believer expect God to control and empower his life, nor can he experience the reality of God's presence and blessing.

In my position as a Torah Teacher I get to speak at various churches from time to time. A very discouraged student came to me for counsel after one of my messages. For several months he had spent at least three hours each day reading his Bible, praying and sharing his faith with others. Yet, he had never introduced anyone to Messiah. After a time of discussion, his problem became apparent: he confessed that he was operating under his own power; he was not controlled and empowered by the Ruach HaKodesh, although he wanted to be. So we prayed together, and by faith he appropriated the power of the Ruach HaKodesh on the authority of God's Word. His life was absolutely transformed. This "appropriating" might be what many are referring to as the "second experience" of the Spirit, the move from the mental ascent that Yeshua is LORD to the spiritual affirmation that he is LORD. That very day he had his first experience of introducing a person to Messiah. Baruch HaShem! Not only do you receive a supernatural power for witnessing when you are filled with the Spirit, but your personality also begins to change. As you continue to walk in the control and power of the Ruach HaKodesh, the fruit of the Spirit becomes increasingly obvious in your life.

In Galatians 5:22, 23, Sha'ul (Paul) explains, "When the Ruach HaKodesh controls our lives He will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control..."

The Spirit and the Word

The believer's relationship with the Ruach HaKodesh is both critical and progressive: *critical*, in that one learns that the Torah life is a life of faith rather than a life of works and has little reference to emotions ("The just shall live by faith."); *progressive*, in that, as one walks consistently in the power and control of the Ruach HaKodesh, the fruit of the Spirit will be produced in his life.

A word of caution is in order. Do not seek an emotional or mystical experience. Do not depend on mystical impressions. That is not to say that when the Spirit comes upon an individual that emotions will not be involved. To be sure, most people express experiencing quite an emotional outburst connected to an encounter with the Divine. Yet, the objective Torah of God and the Fruit of the Spirit must be the basis of measuring and tracking our spiritual growth. There is an interesting parallel between Ephesians 5:18, which admonishes us to be constantly and continually directed and empowered by the Ruach HaKodesh, and Colossians 3:16, which admonishes us to "let the Word of Messiah richly dwell within you..."

The Bible describes one of the end results of both letting the Word (Torah) of Messiah dwell in you and being filled with the Ruach HaKodesh: you will talk much about the LORD quoting psalms and hymns and making music in your heart to the LORD.

It is very important to recognize the importance of the balance between the Torah and the Spirit of God. The Torah is closed to our understanding and has little meaning to us apart from the illumination given by the Ruach HaKodesh, and the Ruach HaKodesh is hindered in speaking clear and life changing truth apart from the Torah.

It is crucial for us to understand theologically, that the primary purpose in HaShem's giving of the Torah, as a way of making someone righteous, only achieves its goal when the person, by faith, accepts that Yeshua is the promised Messiah spoken about therein. Until the individual reaches this conclusion, his familiarity of the Torah is only so much intellectual nutrition. Only by believing in Yeshua will the person be able to properly understand HaShem, and consequently, his Word.

When the emphasis on the ministry of the Ruach HaKodesh and the Torah is in proper balance in your life, the result is a life of power and great fruitfulness in which our Savior, the LORD Yeshua The Messiah, is wonderfully honored and glorified. As you continue then to allow the Ruach HaKodesh to control and empower you, and as you meditate upon the Torah, hiding it in your heart, your life expresses more and more the beauty of Messiah and the fruit of the Spirit which Sha'ul lists in Galatians 5:22, 23. These attributes of our LORD Yeshua Himself—Torah submissiveness, plus fruitful witnessing, indicate that the LORD is actually living his life in and through you!

Being filled with the Spirit results in an abundant and overflowing life. Jesus of Nazareth once cried out to the multitude, "If a man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." John adds, "By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive."

Truly, this is "the abundant life," yet most believers are experiencing little of it.

Question 2:

What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Answer to Question 2:

The terms "baptized" and "filled" are synonyms for the same experience described above. The first term simply connects the experience with the physical baptism that all believers are to undergo, as truthfully, many believers admit to feeling "filled with the Spirit" at the moment of their baptism. The terms are indeed used synonymously.

Question 3:

What does baptized with fire mean?

Answer to Question 3:

Once again, this term helps to describe the experience of being filled with the knowledge of Messiah. Yet, this phrase seems to carry the connotation of a soldier receiving his marching orders. The term "fire" in the Bible is used to convey the power of the Word of God. To be sure, both the Sinai experience and the day of Pentecost were accompanied by great displays of fire. This signifies the Word of God, the Torah, and the Apostolic Scriptures, going forth in power in the life of an individual. To be baptized in fire means to appropriate the knowledge of Messiah with the knowledge of his Torah. Indeed the two go hand in hand. For without the Word of God firmly rooted in a believer how can the Spirit bring all things of Yeshua to his remembrance?

Question 4:

What is the Spirit's fire that can be quenched if we despise prophecy?

Answer to Question 4:

Quench Not the Spirit

I Thessalonians 5:19

In our study of the ministry of the Ruach HaKodesh we understand that the Spirit indwells every believer at the moment of salvation. We also find that there are several direct commands from the Torah concerning the Spirit of HaShem and believers. Let's take a look at one of them. This command "*Quench not the Spirit,*" comes at the close of Sha'ul's first epistle to the Thessalonians. Notice chapter five and beginning with verse twelve. We see the apostle pulling together the final part of his letter. As he begins to close it seems that many exhortations came to mind as he completed the epistle. One of those closing exhortations is "*Quench not the Spirit.*"

What was Sha'ul talking about? Some would use this verse to try to prove that one can lose their salvation and that the Spirit of HaShem can be put out of their lives. We know that this is a misinterpretation as we compare Scripture with Scripture. Yeshua himself promised never to leave us nor forsake us. Sha'ul wrote to the Ephesian believers admonishing them to be careful not to grieve the Ruach HaKodesh who has sealed them until the day of redemption.

The dictionary gives four basic definitions of the word "quench." It means to put out or extinguish; to suppress or squelch; to slake or satisfy one's thirst; and to cool by thrusting in water or some other liquid.

Within the context of this verse we understand it to mean suppressing or squelching the influence of the Ruach HaKodesh of God in the life of a believer. The following outline will help to report our conclusions to this question:

I. Observations

A. The Spirit of HaShem can be "quenched."

1. If it were not true then the Ruach HaKodesh would not have had Sha'ul include this admonition.

2. This action is only attributed to the believer. Unbelievers do not possess the Spirit as an inheritance.

3. Primarily the Ruach HaKodesh is not quenched from without, but from within.

B. What is it that the believer can do to quench the Spirit of HaShem in his life?

1. It is not done merely by committing a single sinful act...for it is the Spirit of God who convicts us of our sin. It is done by continually living in sin—repetitive disobedience to the Torah—even after the Spirit has convicted a person of such sin! The emphasis here is on the “repeat offender,” the believer who expresses knowledge of objective Torah commands and yet refuses to repent.

2. To understand how believers quench the Spirit in their life we have to remind ourselves of how the Spirit ministers to us individually.

3. Note: John 16:13

4. He is here to teach us, guide us, direct us, rebuke us, and to show us the way to unfold the Torah to give us joy, peace and love.

5. His ministry is to transform our lives our character, and our experiences into those of the Messiah Yeshua.

C. We quench the Spirit's influence in our lives when we resist his ministry to us.

1. When we fail to yield ourselves to HaShem.

2. Note: Romans 6:13

3. We quench the Spirit when we say "NO" to HaShem.

4. It has been stated quite aptly, *“Nothing could be more misdirected than a self-directed life.”*

5. When HaShem created us he purposely made us with a "God-shaped hole" on the inside. Even unregenerate man innately recognizes the need for "higher direction" from without himself. Simply put, man was divinely designed to be led by the Spirit of God instead of leading himself along without God. The Scriptures testify to these truths:

a. "Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?" cf. Pr. 20:24

b. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." cf. Jer. 10:23

c. HaShem sent the Ruach HaKodesh into our lives that he might lead and direct us.

II. Yeshua the Messiah is our Example.

A. He was willing to GO where his Father chose.

1. The Creator was willing to come to this earth.
2. He left his glorified position in heaven to come and be rejected on Earth.
3. He came into this world with a mission and message of grace.
4. Are we willing to go wherever the LORD might choose to lead?
5. If not, we quench the Spirit in our lives.

B. He was willing to BE whatever his Father chose.

1. Not only was he willing to lay aside the garments of glory...
2. He was willing to be incarnate...become flesh...the Creator taking on the form of the creation.
3. He "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men," cf. Ph. 2:7
4. Are we willing to be what HaShem wants us to be?
5. If not, we quench the Spirit of God in our lives.

C. He was willing to DO whatever his Father chose.

1. He became obedient unto death.

2. He was willing to give his life on the execution stake that you and I might live eternally.

3. He suffered the cruelest of deaths, not because he deserved to die, but because he chose to take our place that we might go free!

4. Are we willing to be obedient to do what HaShem wants us to do with our lives?

5. If not, we quench the Spirit of God.

III. What does it mean to be yielded to HaShem?

A. It means being willing to:

1. Go anywhere the Father might choose to lead.
2. Be anything that the Father might choose for us to be.
3. Do whatever the Father might choose for us to do.

B. It means being in HaShem's will.

1. This is not a question of being willing to do some single thing one time only...
2. It is a question of being willing to do anything, when, where, and how it may seem best to HaShem.
3. God doesn't expect us to make promises to him about what we will or will not do.
4. The believer in the flesh says, *"If HaShem wants me to do something, let him tell me and I will decide whether or not I will do it."*
5. The yielded believer says, *"I am willing to be made willing to do his will."*
6. Whatever it takes!

Conclusions

Quench not the Spirit. Don't say "no" to HaShem. Don't seek solutions apart from his leading or treat him with indifference. We must be willing to be led, be willing to go, to be, and to do whatever God might choose!

We know that it was the Torah, the very same teachings that we have today, that was inscribed upon the stone tablets that day. We also know that this same Torah is to be inscribed upon our hearts as we serve Yeshua (Jesus), to the glory of HaShem the Father. How do we get the Torah into our hearts? The Spirit of the Holy One makes real the fact that Yeshua the Messiah, in obedience to the Father, emptied himself on our behalf, and became as sin, that we might, consequently, become the righteousness of the Father! In other words, because the Ruach HaKodesh makes the effectual, sacrificial death of Messiah, a living reality in our hearts, we are now free to walk in newness of life! This act of faith on our part brings about the inscription of the Torah upon our hearts! To be sure, the Torah says that HaShem himself does this (Ezekiel 36:26, 27; Jeremiah 31:33)! We are free to pursue the Torah of Truth without condemnation (Romans 8:1)! This new identity in Messiah **is** the righteous relationship that our Heavenly Abba (Father) intended for us all along. The details surrounding that eventful **Shavu'ot** in Jerusalem now serve to remind us of this present reality.

If you have not yet experienced this wonderful truth, that HaShem desires to have a personal relationship with you, then I urge you to accept his Messiah today! The Spirit of the Holy One will fill your life to overflowing, giving you a new and fresh purpose for living! His Spirit will write the Torah upon your heart! To be sure, he has promised to place within you a new voice and a new tongue! Such a tongue sings praises to the Father of Mercies! This very same Father is the one who sent his **only** and **unique** Son into the world to die for the sins of all men!

“Chag Shavu'ot Sah-meach!”

(Happy Festival of Weeks!)

For further study, read: Ex. Chapter 19; Deut. 10:12-16; 30:6; Josh. 1:8; Ps. 19:7-11; 32:1, 2; Prov. 2:5, 6; Isaiah 53:5; Jer. 31:33, 34; Ezek. 36:25-27; John 1:14; Rom. 8:16; Eph. 2:4-10; Phil. 2:10, 11; Heb. 11:6.

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