

Immersion in the Holy Spirit

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In John 14:8-12, Philip said to Yeshua:

“Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” Yeshua said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ‘Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.”

How could this be that Yeshua could say that anyone who believes in Him will do the same works as Yeshua and even greater works because He was going to His Father? I believe in Yeshua, but Yeshua is *mashiach!* I’m not *mashiach!* Yeshua is the sinless begotten son of God! I’m not sinless and I’m begotten of *Tzvi ben Maxwell* – not of God! What a mysterious saying. Could it be so? Can we comprehend having such power that we can do works like Yeshua did – even greater than He did -- or is it one of those mysteries that must remain unsolved?

I don’t think it’s a mystery that must remain unsolved; in fact, I believe the answer is plainly revealed in Scripture. As a starting point, let’s take a look at Acts 1:1-9:

“The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which, He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

So here we see that Yeshua’s disciples were promised power that would be brought upon them by the Holy Spirit – such power as to enable them to become witnesses to Yeshua the world over. We at Ohev Yisrael need that power right now to have the boldness, the wisdom, and the effectiveness to bring our community to a saving knowledge of Yeshua. We need that power to oppose the evil one who would keep us from doing that. We need that power to be able to rid

ourselves of any unclean spirits the enemy may send to oppose us. We need that power to heal our brothers and sisters who are victims of him who would kill us to keep our witness from succeeding.

Well, the disciples were heading for Jerusalem anyway because it was *Shavuot*, the Feast of Weeks, and when they got there they did as Yeshua instructed and we read beginning at verse 12:

Acts 1:12-14: *“Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”*

That last verse – being in one accord in prayer and supplication – reminds me of how we were last Tuesday and Thursday nights when we returned to Ohev on Tuesday and to Pohick Church on Thursday – to our upper room and when we were “with one accord in prayer and supplication. And, if you remember, one of the things we asked for was power to rid ourselves of the evil one – to make our witness fruitful and to heal the sick among us. And we felt some of that power and we left with a great expectation of hope – that there was more to come. So let’s continue to see what happened to those original disciples; we read in Acts 2:1-3:

“When the Day of Shavuot had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

When we read this account what initially grabs us is this strange phenomenon of speaking with tongues – that is, languages not naturally known to the disciples who mainly spoke Aramaic. But what should grab us more is that the disciples – all Jewish – were filled with the Holy Spirit. So by now you are probably thinking that the message I am bringing you is out of season – that it belongs in the Spring at *Shavuot* time. But no, we can’t wait for Spring; we need the power of the Holy Spirit now. Let’s continue to read:

Acts 2:14-21: *“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. “For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood,*

before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved."

That's it! That's what we want! That's what we need! We need God's Spirit poured out in this very room. We need God's Spirit poured out in our homes. We need to see those wonders in heaven and signs in the earth. We need the certainty that anyone who walks into our doors and calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!

And you notice that when the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples it was Peter who stood up and spoke in boldness. Peter the fisherman. A moment earlier he didn't have such knowledge and such boldness. But when he was immersed in the Holy Spirit he became different. He went on to testify about Yeshua as we continue to read in verse 33:

Acts 2:33-41: "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" ' "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Yeshua, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be immersed [some say baptized] in the name of Messiah Yeshua for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were immersed; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."

Now this reminds us of another immersion that occurred earlier when Yochanan (John) immersed Yeshua. And you remember what John said:

John 1:31-34 (adjusted): "I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came immersing with water. I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to immerse with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who immerses with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

Let me be clear. Being empowered by the Holy Spirit is distinct from being Born Again. We need the Holy Spirit to be born of the Spirit in the first place, and that is a work of power. But there is an extra measure of power when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, and this filling does not always happen when we first confess Yeshua. As a consequence, there are many of us who are Born Again (marked for eternal life) yet have never experienced being filled with the Spirit. Here is a biblical example of some new believers in Yeshua who, even after being immersed in water in recognition of their faith, were not filled with the Holy Spirit until hands were laid on them at a later time:

Acts 8:14-17: “Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been immersed in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”

So there is a Baptism of the Holy Spirit – a filling of the Spirit that brings with it more power than we have if we have been born again but have not been filled. There are some – perhaps many – in this room who need the filling of the Holy Spirit but don’t know it. That is easy to understand because, for many of us, our experience of being born again caused us to have such an extreme make-over that we cannot conceive of there being more. But let me surprise you by also saying that there are probably some here who need the filling of the Holy Spirit but who don’t want it. Why? Often because it is associated with speaking in tongues, and tongues scares them.

Let me share with you my own experience with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. In 1977, I was a new believer at Beth Messiah Congregation in Rockville Maryland. I was one of those that needed a complete make-over, so I was ...

<Recount of my experience being filled with the Holy Spirit.>

We are just coming off of a week of prayer and fasting, but don’t think that stopping after a week will accomplish anything. It’s like our country announcing a date of withdrawal from any of its theaters of war. If the enemy knows you’re your resistance will come to an end at a certain time he will just wait for it. No, Ohev Yisrael is entering a new and permanent era of accomplishing God’s will for His congregation through intercessory and warfare praying. I know that we are not all equally motivated in prayer or even equally skilled in prayer, and there are, indeed, different styles of prayer; the style is not the issue; it is the sincerity and faith that accompanies it. I also believe that certain ones of us are specially called to be intercessors as their life’s ministries. Nevertheless, as believers in Yeshua, Jews and Gentiles, we are all called to a walk of faith, holiness and prayer. And I understand our next opportunity will be just a short while from now after the *oneg*.

Thank you Lord for the great works you will enable us to do in your name and for the Holy Spirit’s power that will accomplish it.