

Torah Observant "SHOMER MITZVOT"

שׁוֹמֵר מִצְוֹת

A Series on Practical Messianic Living and Apologetics (halakhah)
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The Ministry of the Ruach HaKodesh

(Note: all quotations are taken from the Complete Jewish Bible, translation by David H. Stern, Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., unless otherwise noted)

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In this commentary I want to address a few questions posed by a sincere believer. The format will follow that of any apologetic book with the reader's questions appearing first with my answer following.

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, עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם "...v'Ruach-Elohim m'rachefet al-paney ha-mayim" (...and the Spirit of God hovered over the face 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..."¹ 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 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)

¹ The Hebrew of Exodus 35:31 reads, "... וַיִּמְלֵא אֹתוֹ רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים."

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 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 ontology 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.”² 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

² According to Thayer’s and Smith’s Bible Dictionary (TSBD) *ἐπί* also means “on, at, by, before, over, against, to, across.”

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:

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 *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

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 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!

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