



SHAVUOT/PENTECOST

5779

By R. Baruch, PhD

חג השבועות תשע"ט

Shavuot/Pentecost 5779

As believers in Messiah Yeshua, there is for us a strong connection between the Holy Spirit and the Festival of Weeks (Pentecost). When a person examines this special festival from the perspective of the book of Acts chapter 2, this one learns about how the Holy Spirit brings clarity to the Word of G-d. In fact, when those Jewish individuals having gone up to Jerusalem specifically for the festival heard the Apostles speaking, what was emphasized according to Acts 2:11 were the **great things of G-d**. What can the reader discern from this? The answer is that through the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer, one can understand what are the things that G-d wants to do. Furthermore, G-d will supply the believer the power to do these great things in glory to Him.

This leads me to a very important and foundational question for you. Are you interested in the things that G-d wants to do in and through your life? Recently I asked an elderly man, who had been a believer for nearly 40 years, for what reason did Yeshua place His Spirit within him? This man, who faithfully attended services each week, did not know. In other words, although the Holy Spirit was within him, the Spirit appeared to be dormant within him. Quite frankly, I find this last statement to be problematic. If someone is truly a believer and not being obedient to the purposes of G-d, then the Holy Spirit will convict him of his sin and cause this one to eventually repent.

As the Scripture says, *“For who the L-rd loves He punishes...”* Hebrews 12:6

In returning to Acts chapter 2 and the day of Pentecost, all those ones who had gathered to Jerusalem for the festival heard the Apostles speaking in their own language. What a miracle! All these men from various places and each having their own native language, understood the words of the Apostles in their own native tongue. This miracle clearly demonstrates that G-d wants you to know His truth. Whenever I am about to read Scripture, I first pray that the Holy Spirit will give me clarity so that I should comprehend the message of the Biblical text. It is most significant that when Peter began to explain what had taken place on that festival day he turned to the prophecy of Joel (see Acts 2:16-21) to help the people understand both what was taking place and why. Therefore, if a person does not know the message of the prophets well, then this one will not be able to serve G-d with discernment.

As Peter spoke on Shavuot, he quickly turned to the coming judgment when he mentioned the **Day of the L-rd**. Yeshua is returning indeed and He will most definitely pour out the wrath of G-d upon this earth at the time of His Second Coming. In fact, prophetically, the world will be in a terrible state of unrighteousness immediately prior to Yeshua's return. Things are not going to get better in the world, but they will be much worse. The Church will be largely apostate in the End Times. This view is strongly in opposition to a **false teaching** known as **New Apostolic Reformation -NAR**. It is not my purpose to critique this entire movement, but to point out only one of its many problems. This problem is the doctrine of **Dominionism**. In short, this doctrine teaches that through the death and resurrection of Messiah, Christians will take control of the earth. It is true that Satan has been defeated; however, he has **not** yet been bound in the Abyss. Also, although believers will be victorious in the end, this does not mean the Church will prepare the Kingdom for Yeshua. One must remember that the followers of Messiah will be

greatly persecuted in the last days and according to Revelation 13:7, the saints will even be overcome by the beast (the beast is the empire that will rule over the world during the last seven years immediately prior to Yeshua's return and His establishment of the Kingdom). Dying for one's faith in Messiah is not a problem, for it is by resurrection that one enters into the Kingdom. Believers suffering for their faith and even dying is what Yeshua was referring to when He told His followers to lift up their cross and follow Him.

Dominionism places an emphasis on both the power and work of the Holy Spirit in the believer, which is a good thing. However, this doctrine fails miserably in rightly applying prophetic truth (The Biblical Prophets) to what they "discern" the Spirit revealing. They have a misplaced understanding of the Apostolic position today. Those within the NAR who take upon themselves the office of Apostle tend to assume divine authority and utilize this power to rule over other believers in an unscriptural manner.

A key verse for those who adhere to this movement is Acts 3:19. This verse foretells a future time when there will be a strong outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the End Times. I agree that this will take place, but my point of contention with them is that they assume this movement of the Spirit will bring about believers taking over the world and bringing all things under the will of G-d. Their view is in essence a type of "post-millennialism". This means that it is the Church that will establish the Kingdom and Yeshua will return at the end of the thousand years. Dominionism understands the Millennium as Messiah reigning through the Church today, rather than Him actually being present as the ruling King during the Millennium.

Another major emphasis of the NAR is signs and wonders. I certainly do not deny that today there are miracles and the Holy Spirit is doing wondrous things. But these signs are not confirmation of a New Apostolic movement, but they are a confirmation of the truth of the Word of G-d. This has always been the purpose of miracles. It is simply unscriptural for individuals to claim that miracles confirm certain people as modern Apostles. Nor will an increase of signs and wonders bring the world to submit to the purposes of G-d. Rather the outpouring of Yeshua's miraculous power in the End Times will bring about greater persecution, just as it did in the first century. A good example of this is the two witnesses in the second half of Daniel's 70th week. Although the Church will not be present at this time, these two witnesses will clearly display the power of G-d through signs. They will testify the truth of G-d for 1,260 days. What will be their primary message? The fact that they bear witness clothed in sackcloth reveals that they call the world to repentance. After they finish their message, the beast will overcome them and kill them. Even these two mighty witnesses, who have been anointed with great power and who do great things, are "defeated". But once again, this is not a problem, because after three and a half days they are resurrected. Their faithfulness does not establish the Kingdom, rather it is only after the Second Coming of Messiah that the Kingdom is established. The Bible does not reveal a modern day Apostolic Reformation which will convert the world and bring about righteousness; rather the wrath of G-d will destroy a thoroughly wicked world and only after this will Yeshua establish the Kingdom of everlasting righteousness.

The false theology of the NAR is extremely popular and there is a fast growing number of believers who are embracing their doctrines. When one listens to their leaders, he or she will learn that the basis of what they are teaching is claims of miraculous power and testimonies of signs and wonders, and **not** sound exposition of the Word of G-d. For them, it is their so-called modern day "prophets" who utter "new

revelation” to reveal to their followers what will happen and how to understand their miraculous claims; rather than on sound expository teaching of the Biblical Prophets.

It would do each of us well to read the book of Acts and learn that as the true Apostles were demonstrating the power of the Holy Spirit with signs and wonders, this period was accompanied by strong opposition to the Gospel message and intense persecution. In Acts chapter seven, Stephen taught the Sanhedrin a lesson of Biblical history and how prophetically it was the time for the Holy Spirit to move in the world and the One who they opposed was in fact the Messiah. He clearly stated that their failure to discern Biblical truth caused them to resist the Holy Spirit. It was indeed their lack of prophetic understanding that gave rise to a time of great persecution which scattered believers.

The festival of Shavuot is the birthday of the congregation of the redeemed. We have a message to proclaim and a calling to fulfill. Let’s be sure that what we are saying and doing is in fact in line with prophetic truth and the moving of the Holy Spirit in our days. Amen.