

With the Holy Spirit and Fire

¹⁶ John answered them all, saying, "As for me, I immerse you with water. But One is coming who is mightier than I am; I am not worthy to untie the strap of His sandals! He will immerse you in the Ruach ha-Kodesh and fire." ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in His hand to clear His threshing floor and gather the wheat into His barn, but the chaff He will burn up with inextinguishable fire" (Luke 3:16-17)

Sometimes the Holy Spirit activates a Scriptural passage in a way you had not experienced it before. So it was for me as I read the passage above. Notice that the verse emphasizes one of the functions of the fire the disciples were to receive on Shavuot: *to burn up the chaff after gathering in the wheat*. We note that wheat is right in the middle of the Shavuot Festival.

There is special significance to the timing of Shavuot tied to the *Omer* and the harvest. The festival was fixed at the end of a season lasting seven weeks, namely the period of the *Counting the Omer*, which commences on the first day of *Chol Hamoed Pesach* in Israel [second night of the festival in the Diaspora] according to the rabbinical tradition and the first day of the week after the weekly Shabbat of *Pesach* according to the Second Temple/Karaite view which is based on the literal rendering of the Hebrew text of Lev. 23. During this period, there is a fierce struggle between the easterly and the westerly winds intensifying in *Eretz Israel*. The dry easterly winds on the one hand, and the westerly winds on the other, bearing clouds and the danger of sudden rains, can lead to sudden weather changes, affecting the field crops and plantations. Thus the 49 days of the *Omer* are counted with some degree of trepidation. But when *Shavuot* arrives, the weather stabilizes. The farmer already knows the fate of the grain crops, but he has no guarantee of the success of the harvest of the fruit that grow in summer. But this is known only at the Harvest Festival (another name for *Shavuot*). *Shavuot* is also known as the Festival of Reaping. The barley harvest that commenced on *Pesach* ends on *Shavuot*, when the wheat harvest begins (wheat ripens later than barley). *Shavuot* is also known as the Festival of First fruits - Just as the *Omer* offering of the new barley is brought on *Pesach* (during the festival of *the first harvest*), so on *Shavuot*, at the end of the barley harvest, the offering of the two showbread loaves of wheat (baked with leaven) is brought. These offerings are *mitzvot* that are not binding on the individual, but on the public, and they were brought to the Temple.

Why two loaves? (See my message from June 1, 2019 entitled "*Two Loaves Baked with Leaven*" at <http://www.kolsimcha.org/messages/2019/060119M.pdf>). Briefly, the wheat harvest represents the harvest of souls. These loaves represent people (Jews and Gentiles) that are knitted together and baked into loaves. These are people that are not so spiritual that they have *no leaven*. Instead we are asked to bring flesh and blood people with their problems (leavening) as *firstfruits* of this wheat harvest. Who are *firstfruit* people? Is it not our family whom we are supposed to nurture? As I have shared many times before, each grain that becomes a *firstfruit* plant decides within itself to become *firstfruits* and every grain has the capability to do so. So it is with us. I believe that today we are *firstfruit* people ready to be offered on the altar at this *Shavuot*.

We note that we have also been counting the *Omer* with trepidation this year. We are aware of the fact that the 2020 *Pesach* was unlike any *Pesach* we had ever experienced. It follows that *Shavuot 2020* would also be special. As such we have been anticipating its arrival. The Prophetic Community has been sharing with the Body of Messiah countless prophetic utterings about this *Shavuot*. I shared last week that: "the Lord has sent word to us, via His servants the prophets, that after **Repenting** (Passover) we are being **Reset** (a great Reset from Passover to Pentecost) in order that we may be **Recalibrated** (like a great chiropractic adjustment) at Shavuot/Pentecost. This is to be followed by **Recovery, Restoration (Restitution) and Revival**. This **Recalibration** is the **New Normal**." I also shared last week that: "I know in my spirit that, like it or not, we are dawning a new era of opportunities in the Believing world. Not only are **Recovery, Restoration (Restitution) and Revival** Messianic concepts but also is it possible that the **Revival** being talked about could be the Great Last Revival before *Yeshua's* return? Even a remote maybe (not even a yes) is enough to instill and stir up a sense of destiny. Am I ready? Is my congregation ready?"

Shavuot is upon us and we are COMING TO HIM TOMORROW to ASK HIM TO EMPOWER US WITH WHATEVER HE WANTS TO GIVE US SO THAT WE WILL HAVE GREATER POWER TO DO HIS WILL. What are you expecting? I am expecting nothing less than the full measure of the Father's Promise: ⁴⁸ *You are witnesses of these things.* ⁴⁹ *And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.* (Luke 24: 48-49). ⁴ *Now while staying with them, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father promised – which, He said, “you heard from Me.* ⁵ *For John immersed with water, but you will be immersed in the Ruach ha-Kodesh not many days from now” (Acts 1:4-5).* But I also want what John the Baptists said in Luke 3: *“immersed in the Ruach ha-Kodesh and fire.”*

On the first recorded extended appearance of the resurrected *Yeshua* (on the Road to Emmaus) we read: ³² *They said to one another, “Didn’t our heart burn within us while He was speaking with us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32).* When it comes to *Yeshua* and *“the things written about Him in all the Scriptures” (Vv. 27)* I want my heart to *burn within me*. Let the zeal of God consume me like it did *Yeshua* when he overturned the tables in John 2:14-17. And I want the zeal of God in Phinehas (Pinchas) in Nu. 25 when he stopped the plague. I want the zeal of *Adonai* that Isaiah, Ezekiel, Elijah, Joel and Zechariah talk about. I want ♪ *“The Zeal of God has consumed me, it burns in my soul. A driving force that cannot be stopped, a fire that cannot be burned.”*♪

If we embrace this we will not be lukewarm. Instead we will be experiencing *firepower* in all we do. You see COVID's enemy is heat. We need to raise the temperature. I want the fire of God in my bones to burn out all the enemy's viruses. I want the fire of *Adonai* within me that is *inextinguishable and burns the chaff* out my life. I have been expecting the rain of the Spirit to come, but what I really want is for the fire of God to rain upon me showers of fire and not of water. I want my life to burn with the Word of the Lord and with the Zeal of the Lord and, ultimately, with the Lord Himself. I want my life to matter and my zeal for Him to accomplish much, since much is written about His Zeal: *“Of the increase of His government and shalom there will be no end – on the throne of David and over His kingdom – to establish it and uphold it through justice and righteousness from now until forevermore. The zeal of Adonai-Tzva’ot will accomplish this” (Isa. 9:6).*

I want the fire of God that compels me to partake in the: *“... kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matt. 11:12).* Have you ever felt that fire? I have but not lately. It is time, it is our time, and it is our congregation's time. The world wants truth, and we have THE TRUTH in His Word. The world does not need more excuses or weak justifications because they are fed up. I am fed up! I really believe this is our time. This is our chance. This is our opportunity. Come tomorrow with your somewhat empty cup so He can fill it up to overflowing. Come tomorrow with an expectant heart. Come tomorrow ready to be immersed, empowered, equipped and sent. There is a volume of the book written about us: ⁸ *Then I said: “Here I am, I have come—in the scroll of a book it is written about me.* ⁹ *I delight to do Your will, O my God. Yes, Your Torah is within my being.”* ¹⁰ *I proclaim good news of righteousness in the great assembly. Behold, I am not shutting my lips— Adonai, You know!* ¹¹ *I did not hide Your righteousness within my heart. Rather I declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation. I did not conceal Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great assembly” (Psalm 40:8-11).* Can we wait another year? Are we to continue in our status quo? It is a new normal and a new era upon us. I want to be relevant, I want to be used of the Holy Spirit, and I want to see us accomplish much for Him. Change me O Lord! Empower me O Lord! Anoint me O Lord! Let me be relevant O Lord! Let me make a difference O Lord! Let me delight to do Thy Will O Lord! Are you ready?