

1st Century Messianic Congregation Topics

We enter into God's presence through the Holy Spirit

God promised Israel that His presence would be among them.

Exodus 25:1-9 NKJV

"Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. And this is the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats' hair; ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.'"

God wanted Israel to make a beautiful place even though God does not dwell in temples made with hands. God promised to dwell, to live among the people. The Tent of Meeting (Mishkan) was the place where God would show His presence. Unlike the pagan gods that can do nothing, the true God has an impact as well as a presence. Even though God is not limited to a building or a place (Isaiah 66:1), He chose to show His presence to Israel and they saw His presence at the Mishkan where there was a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night the whole time they were in the desert. This is truly amazing. Imagine being able to look toward the Mishkan and see the visible presence of God!

Shaul (Paul) says that we are temples of the Holy Spirit when we believe in the Messiah Yeshua. First, Kefa (Peter) said in Acts 2:38-39 NKJV, "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ 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.'"

Kefa tells them to turn towards God; that's what repent means. The Hebrew word for this is Teshuvah and means to turn. When we turn towards God, we rely on Him; we fellowship with Him; there is a mutual agreement that we will keep God's commandments and behave like we are His people and part of His family. We look to God for all we do and because we are His people, He looks on us and keeps us and blesses us.

Kefa then says we are to be immersed in the authority of the Messiah Yeshua. We are to recognize His authority and that He is the Messiah. It is through Yeshua that we receive forgiveness of sin and it is through faith in Him that we can receive the Holy Spirit. God has promised it to us and our children and anyone who will listen to the call of our Messiah Yeshua. Yeshua said, "Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne;" Revelation 3:19-21 NKJV.

Although this was a message to some people back in the 1st century, it is also a message to us. God wants us to lead a life where we continue to follow Him and turn towards Him. We establish a personal relationship with the Messiah and talk to Him and fellowship with Yeshua. Yeshua says that in a future time, we will be honored for being zealous for God. We will get to sit with Him.

When we receive the Messiah, we are to receive the Holy Spirit. Shaul says we become temples or vessels for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is then with us to help us to keep God's commandments. It says in 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 NKJV, "He who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you

not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." Shaul is encouraging them not to commit sexual immorality. He talks about how we are vessels that contain the Holy Spirit. God expects us to demonstrate who He is by glorifying Him in what we do. God has redeemed us through the Messiah, so we should behave like we are God's people.

That's why it says in Hebrews that the Holy Spirit should not be treated as a common thing or something ordinary. The Holy Spirit is of great worth. "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace;" Hebrews 10:29 NKJV. What God has given us **is not** a common ordinary thing.

Kefa said in 2 Peter 1:3-4 NKJV, "His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Yeshua has called us to godliness, glory, virtue, great promises, and to be imitators of Him. He has called us to escape the corruption and worldly ungodly desires of the world. His divine power through the Holy Spirit is at work in us and helping us. Acts 1:8 NKJV says, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."

The Tent of Meeting in the desert was to be beautiful, and be a place for the presence of God. The people could see God's presence among them every day. Those who believe in the Messiah have the presence of God with them in the Holy Spirit and can experience the Holy Spirit. Think about the things that happened at the Tent of Meeting (Mishkan) in the desert and at the Temple. The fire of God came down from heaven. "Fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering;" Leviticus 9:24 NKJV. God's glory filled the Temple, "So that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord;" 1 Kings 8:11 NKJV. What about us? We also can experience God's presence because we are vessels of the Holy Spirit.

How do we experience the Holy Spirit?

- * Often the Holy Spirit will remind us to do what is right. The Holy Spirit is our helper (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit does not tell us to sin or do what is wrong.
- * The Holy Spirit can work in our minds to be kind, caring, patient. Shaul (Paul) talks about the fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23.
- * The Holy Spirit may lead us to do something at times during the day.
- * The Holy Spirit may call us for a specific purpose like serving the poor and other acts of service.
- * The Holy Spirit gives us gifts. These are supernatural gifts. For example, a person who gives a prophetic word speaks words from God and not simply their thoughts. It is wrong to say we speak from God when they are simply our thoughts. God can give believers many spiritual gifts. In the Old Testament, God even gave gifting for building and making the Tent of Meeting in the desert. There are lists of gifts in Romans 12:4-8, Ephesians 4:11-13, and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. Jewish lists are short lists rather than listing everything. For example, Shaul (Paul) does not list all possible sins every time he talks about sins.
- * We can experience the peace of the Holy Spirit and God can work in many other ways. We may even feel a peace that seems to make 30 minutes like 5 minutes.

We are to be a beautiful people just like the Mishkan was a beautiful place and we are to be a people who love God and follow His commandments as true children. That's why Yochanan said in 1 John 3:1 NKJV, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God." Just like God was to the Father of the children of Israel ("For I am a Father to Israel;" Jer. 31:9 NKJV),

He longs to Father us and for us to receive His Holy Spirit to help us live right. Yochanan said, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ 1 John 1:3 NKJV.

God's good children are in fellowship with Him. Those who live a life of turning towards God will be loved by the God of the universe. He will honor us as dear children and we will even sit on His throne with Him because we glorify God. Perhaps we will sit on our Father's lap. We can be true children of the King. We have a great hope. The Holy Spirit is be our helper to do good. "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; Philippians 1:6 NKJV. God loves us and has given us the Holy Spirit. "Because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us;" Romans 5:5 NKJV. God loves us and wants to be with us and help us, so it is fitting that we respond and love God with all our heart. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength;" Deuteronomy 6:5 NKJV.