

Torah Portion #17: Yitro (יתרו) "Jethro"

Torah ~ Exodus 18:1-20:23 | Prophets ~ Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 58:13-14 | New Covenant ~ Matthew 8:5-20; Hebrews 4:9-11

The Sabbath

In this weeks Torah portion the Lord gives Moses the Torah at Mt Sinai. Within the Torah are 613 laws, the most well none of these laws are the Ten Commandments. The most misinterpreted of the Ten Commandments is the fourth, the Sabbath command (*Exodus 20:8-11; Exodus 31:12-17; Exodus 35:1-3; Leviticus 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:12-15*).

By repeating the subject of Sabbath (Shabbat) in scripture, God is telling us how important it is to Him. In *Exodus 31:16* we are told to "observe" the Sabbath. The Hebrew word translated as observe is "shamar" which means "to guard and protect". God wants His people to guard and protect the Sabbath day by keeping it, setting it apart and making it a Holy.

When is the Sabbath ?

The Shabbat is the 7th day of the week, it was given at creation (*Genesis 2:1-3*), before the Law was given at Mt Sinai. It begins at sunset on Friday night and continues through sunset on Saturday night.

Genesis 1:5b "And the evening and the morning were the first day." KJV.

The crucifixion of Yeshua was on a Friday and had to be finished before the Sabbath, which would have been Saturday.

John 19:31 "Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." NKJV

Yeshua even keep the Sabbath day in His death by resting in the tomb until the first day of the week.

Mark 16:2 "And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb." ESV

How do we keep the Sabbath ?

Exodus 16:22-26 (Manna) says to prepare before the Shabbat so that you have nothing to do but focus on God.

Luke 4:16b "And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read." ESV

Nehemiah 13:15-22 says not to buy and sell on the Shabbat (example: shopping, eating out, yard sale, etc.)

Jeremiah 17:21-22 "(21) Thus says the Lord: "Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; (22) nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers." NKJV

Keeping the Shabbat is not necessarily a lack of doing things, instead it is doing the things that set the day apart from the other days of the week. It draws us together as a community to worship God and learn who we are in Messiah Yeshua.

Are we blessed when we keep Sabbath ?

Deut. 28:1-14 says that we are blessed when we obey God's Laws, this includes the Shabbat. (For example: our health)

Isaiah 56:2; 58:13-14 confirms the blessing that we receive when we keep the Shabbat

Mark 2:27 "Shabbat was made for man, and not man for Shabbat." TLV (physically, mentally, spiritually renewed)

Was the Sabbath done away in the New Testament ?

Acts 18:4 "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks." ESV

Acts 20:7-9 (where a man falls out of the window) is often used to say that the first day of the week is now the Sabbath.

Hebrews 4:9-10 "(9) So there remains a Shabbat-keeping for God's people. (10) For the one who has entered God's rest has also rested from his own works, as God did from his." CJB

It is said that the apostle John is keeping Sunday in *Rev. 1:10* when it says that he was "in the spirit on the Lord's day". But in *Mark 2:28*, Yeshua said that He is "Lord of the Sabbath". Therefore the Shabbat is "the Lord's day".

In Closing

We do not keep God's Laws (Shabbat) in order to earn our salvation, we keep them because we are already saved. We keep them because they are our Heavenly Fathers instructions for us, His children. So let us therefore follow our Saviour's example of when and how to keep all of God's Laws, including the Shabbat.