

Shabbat

By Matthew Day

Shabbat is a very unique command. It is the first thing mentioned as being Holy. It is the first Moed (appointed time) mentioned. It is mentioned more times than most commandments in the law. It is the only “ritual” commandment in the ten commandments. And it is one of the few commandments that isn't very specific on how to keep it. So, what does Shabbat mean?

(Genesis 2:3) And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Shabbat is a remembrance that God is the creator. He is in charge, not us. On this day we rest from our own creations, just as God did, and remember that it is God who provides for our needs. Shabbat shows a picture of faith, because we remember that it is not our own works that sustain us, but rather it is God's grace.

(Romans 7:6) But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

Shabbat is a picture of our freedom from the law. Now that we have our faith in Yeshua, we are not bound by the law. We are not bound to it for salvation (for it cannot save you). We are no longer bound to keep the law in fear. Rather we have the freedom to keep it from the heart “in newness of spirit”. To keep the law because “I have to keep it” is legalism. That is the old covenant. God does not want empty works. What He desires is a heart that wants to serve Him. The reason that I try to keep Torah is because of my love for God and the joy that I find in His commandments.

In Shabbat we are commanded not to work (Hebrew: Melakah, Strong's H4399). This shows us that our works cannot save us. On Shabbat we are commanded not to buy or sell. This shows us that we cannot buy our way into God's Kingdom. It is not through our works that we gain salvation but through faith in His Work.

(Deuteronomy 5:15) And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

Shabbat shows our freedom from the world. It is a day when we can separate ourselves from the things of the world. You don't have to worry about what you'll eat. That was prepared the day before. You don't have to be burdened by work (whether that be your occupation or your household chores). You don't have to be distracted by shopping. Many families turn off the television for Shabbat. It is a day when you can focus on what is important: God and family. It is a time set aside to fellowship with other believers and study God's Word. Because of the work of Yeshua, we are no longer bound to serve Egypt. We are no longer bound to serve the world. We have the freedom to serve God.

(Hebrews 4:9) There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

In the garden of Eden, Adam did not have to till the ground or work to produce food. But after he sinned, the ground was cursed and rest was taken away from man. Yet God

preserved a small piece of the garden in Shabbat. Shabbat is just a taste of what it was like before the fall of man and what it will be like after the return of Yeshua. It is part of the first fruits of the promise we have in Messiah. It is a shadow of the real thing that is yet to come. So, when we keep Shabbat let us look forward to the coming of Yeshua HaMashiach.