

Parasha Yitro

Exodus 18:1-20:23

Isaiah 6:1-7:6, 9:5-8

Matthew 5:8-20



The Torah Portion at a Glance

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro or "Yitro" in Hebrew, hears of the great miracles which YHWH performed for the people of Israel. Yitro comes from Midian to the Israelite camp, bringing with him Moses' wife and two sons. Yitro advises Moses to appoint a hierarchy of magistrates and judges to assist him in the task of governing and administering justice to the people.

The Children of Israel camp opposite Mount Sinai, where they are told that YHWH has chosen them to be His "kingdom of priests" and "holy nation." The people respond by proclaiming, "All that YHWH has spoken, we shall do."

On the sixth day of the third month (Sivan), seven weeks after the Exodus, the entire nation of Israel assembles at the foot of Mount Sinai. YHWH descends on the mountain amidst thunder, lightning, billows of smoke and the blast of the shofar, and summons Moses to ascend.

YHWH proclaims the Ten Commandments, commanding the people of Israel to believe in YHWH, not to worship idols or take YHWH's name in vain, to keep the Shabbat, honor their parents, and not to murder, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness or covet another's property. The people cry out to Moses that the revelation is too intense for them to bear, begging him to receive the Torah from YHWH and convey it to them.

(adapted from chabad.org)

The Messiah in the Torah Portion

The expression "third day" is found all throughout the Bible as a special code of significance. Some of the most important events in the history of Israel occurred on the third day. For example, we can read in the Torah portion, Yitro, that after three days of preparation the Law/Torah was given to Moses. This pattern is a spiritual truth that is repeated throughout the Scriptures. For example, the Torah was given after three days of preparation and Y'shua rose from the dead on the third day after his death. The Messiah said, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, Matthew 12:40. The giving of Torah on the third day is a prophetic picture of the resurrection of Y'shua on the third day.

Here are some more instances of the third day to consider:

- "The earth brought forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit." (Genesis 1:12)
- "Abraham looked up and saw the place [Mount Moriah] from afar." There he intends to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering to YHWH. Yet he assures his companions, "We will worship and return." (Genesis 22:4-5)
- Pharaoh releases his chief cupbearer from death-row. (Genesis 40:20-21)
- Joseph releases his brothers from prison in Egypt. (Genesis 42:17-18)

- The Israelites request Pharaoh’s permission to make a three-day journey to offer sacrifice in the desert to YHWH. (Exodus 3:18)
- Plague Nine, the Plague of Darkness, in Egypt ends, “though the Israelites enjoyed light in their dwellings.” (Exodus 10:22)
- YHWH descends to Mount Sinai in fire with the sound of a shofar. He then reveals The Ten Words, Israel’s constitution of new life as a nation after their resurrection from the death of slavery in Egypt. (Exodus 19:16-19)
- Israelites are to purify themselves with water after being in contact with the dead. (Numbers 19:12)
- After coming to the river and preparing themselves, the Israelites cross the Jordan “to enter and possess the land that YHWH [their] YHWH is giving to [them] as a possession.” (Joshua 1:11; 3:2)
- Joshua’s spies emerge from hiding from the Jerichoites, then return to their commander. (Joshua 2:16, 22)
- A famine during David’s reign ends. (2 Samuel 21:1).
- A famine called for by Elijah the prophet ends. (1 Kings 18:1)
- After asking YHWH for release, King Hezekiah is healed of his fatal disease and offers thanks in the temple. (2 Kings 20:5)
- Jonah is expelled from the fish belly. (Jonah 1:17/2:1 Heb) (Matt 12:40; cf Matt 16:21; 17:23)
- After fasting, Esther puts on royal apparel and enters the palace of the Persian king in order to thwart a death-plot against her people, the Jews. (Esther 4:16; 5:1)

Within the pages of an open Bible lay many references to the third day. Each of these verses and occurrences can be tied directly to the Messiah Y’shua. Truly, a study of the Torah is a study of Y’shua!

Applying the Portion to Life Today

Moses is considered by many to be a great man. Some have called him a prophet. The Bible says he was the “most humble in the entire earth.” Did you know that Moses was also an evangelist? Part of Moses’ ministry (and ours) was to tell others of the wonders of YHWH. He described YHWH’s power to Pharaoh and spoke of His wonders to the people of Israel. Moses also shared with his father-in-law about how YHWH led the people of Israel out of bondage. There is much we can learn about evangelism and sharing our faith from this week’s Torah portion and the prophet Moshe.

Psalms 19:7 explains that the Torah of YHWH has the power to convert souls from darkness to light. This means that through properly using the Torah we can witness to the lost and show them the true plan of salvation. The Torah converts us FIRST at salvation. THEN it converts and sanctifies us as we walk with YHWH! The Torah transforms us! As we follow Torah we move from an existence based on momentary happiness to a life of meaning and purpose. It corrects our soul and converts our fleshly natures to holy desires. Psalm 19:7, “The Torah of YHWH is perfect, converting the soul.” In this verse the word for “converting” is the Hebrew phrase “shuv” which means to “turn, return, refresh, restore, and reverse.”

When YHWH revealed the Ten Commandments He was in essence establishing the basic requirements of mankind that can either redeem a person or condemn them as guilty before YHWH. The Torah was given to set the standard for righteous living. “I had not known sin but by the law,” Romans 7:7. The Torah itself is not sinful but acts as an agent to reveal a person's sin. A person sins when they disobey the words of the Bible. “Sin is transgression of the law / Torah,” 1 John 3:4. The Torah shows us our sin and our need for a Savior. As a mirror, the Torah stops sinners from rationalizing their goodness. There is none righteous no not one! Romans 3:19, “Now we know that whatsoever things the Torah says, it says to them who are under the Torah that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before YHWH.”

The Ten Commandments, given in our weekly Torah portion, are known by children worldwide and people of various faiths. These commands are a type of mirror that each person should see their reflection within. The mirror is broken when a person violates just one precept. "Wherefore the Torah was our schoolmaster to bring us to Y'shua that we might be justified by faith," Galatians 3:24 KJV. The Bible says that the wages of sin is death. When a person violates just one of these commands he is then guilty of breaking them all. By reminding people of the 10 Commandment we can help them come face to face with their sinful ways.

Too many times, the Gospel is presented simply as "Jesus loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." This is not the Good News according to the Bible. The Scriptures state that "godly sorrow worketh repentance" in 2 Corinthians 7:10. What this means is that for a person to experience the conversion of their soul then they must first show sorrow for their sins. When you begin to use the Torah for its rightful purpose, as a mirror that reflects obedience or disobedience, then people can have true conversion in their faith. How should you do this? Well, if you can remember the word **TORAH** then you can share the plan of salvation with others.

The "T" in Torah stands for "Times are hard." When you are talking with someone, simply talk about the bad economy, wars, natural disasters, or whatever. People love to talk about bad times and current events. The pain that the world experiences help soften the lost to the Gospel message.

The "O" in Torah stands for "On a scale of one to ten, do you consider yourself to be a good person?" Ask this question! This is a simple way to shift any conversation to spiritual subjects. Most people will rate themselves a 4 or 5 as they don't think they are too sinful or too holy. Your question at this point starts their mind on the journey to repentance.

The "R" in Torah stands for "Remember the Ten Commandments?" The Ten Commandments are well known by most people and establish an easily recognizable map of righteousness. Ask them if they have kept the Ten Commandments perfectly. Then remind your friend that violation of one command makes them guilty of breaking them all. Showing a person the mirror of the Torah allows the Holy Spirit to convict them of sin and wrong doing.

Say something like, "Remember the 10 Commandments? This is the Almighty's standard for goodness. Have you kept them all perfectly? Probably not. This means you are guilty of sin before the Almighty." At this point in the conversation you can begin using the Torah to show a person their sinfulness. Most people are familiar with a few of the 10 Commandments. By bringing these commandments to "light" the person's sinfulness is exposed and their conscience is pricked. "The commandment is a lamp and the law is light," Proverbs 6:23. The Torah burns in their soul as man's inadequacy is magnified. Remember, the standard of Torah acts as a mirror for people to compare themselves to.

Ask that person, "Have you ever stolen something, even something small? What does that make you? A THIEF!" Then remind them that the Bible says that having hatred in your heart is equal to committing murder. "Whoever is angry with his neighbor without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment," Matthew 5:22. The Scriptures also state that "no thief will inherit the kingdom of Heaven," 1 Corinthians 6:10. And, the Savior said that whoever looks upon a woman with lust in His heart has already committed adultery. Ask the person, "Have you ever done these thing? If so, what does that make you? An adulterer, liar, or thief."

The "A" in Torah stands for "Are you concerned about this?" and "Are you going to heaven when you die?" Remind the person that "by your own admission you are a lying, stealing, adulterer at heart and will face the Almighty on judgment day. As you face judgment day, will you be guilty or innocent?"

The Torah will provoke the conscience of the person “which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness” Romans 2:15. Ask them, “Are you keeping the commandments of Torah?”

The “H” in Torah stands for “Have you heard of the name of YHWH Y’SHUA?” This is the name of salvation. Explain that “Anyone who calls upon the name of YHWH shall be saved,” Acts 2:21. “For YHWH so loved the world, that He gave His only brought forth Son, that whoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” John 3:16. YHWH Y’SHUA is the name of salvation! At the burning bush, the Almighty said, “I AM that which I AM YHWH, YHWH is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.” YHWH is found hidden behind the capitalized terms “LORD” or “YHWH” in most English Bibles. However, YHWH's name was not intended to be hidden by translators. YHWH Himself gave us His name a sign of His existence and as a means of personal relationship.

Say, “By repenting of your sins and calling upon the name of YHWH Y’SHUA, you can receive the gift of eternal life. “YHWH showed His great love for us in this manner – while we were still sinners Y’shua died for us,” Romans 5:8.”

By following this simple outline of **TORAH** you can effectively share the Good News with your friends and family. Take this knowledge and pray for an opportunity to explain the faith. Then, as you meet someone this week simply explain **TORAH** to them and allow them to make a decision. As you do this, you will find the immense power of the blood of Y’shua and our Torah portion. Plus, you will be acting just like Moshe who evangelized his father-in-law through the wonders of YHWH’s Torah.

Portion Points to Ponder

1. The Hebrew name for this portion is “Yitro.” What does this mean?
2. Read Jeremiah Isaiah 6:1-7:6, 9:5-8. How does this relate to the story of Exodus this week?
3. Consider the words found in Matthew 5:8-20. What did you learn from studying this passage?
4. How does this Torah portion speak of the Messiah Y’shua?
5. Describe two ways that you can apply this week’s Torah portion to your life.
6. Who did Yitro worship?
7. Why was Tzipora with her father, Yitro, and not with Moshe when
8. Bnei Yisrael left Egypt?
9. Why did Moshe tell Yitro all that YHWH had done for the Jewish People? Why is it important to tell others of what YHWH has done for you?
10. Who were the Midians? Were they friends of Israel?
11. What were the names of Moses’ two children?
12. Explain the Hebraic custom of greeting someone with a kiss and even a bow. Who in the Torah used this type of greeting? Compare this to Romans 16:16. Should believers do this today?
13. In Exodus 18:10, Yitro says a blessing to YHWH. Is Yitro confessing faith in YHWH for the first time?
14. Explain how often times wisdom and counsel from others helps accomplish the will of YHWH.
15. The requirements of Israel’s leadership are listed in Exodus 18:21&22. What type of judgment were these people to pass? What were attributes each judge was to have?
16. Did Moses establish a spiritual hierarchy with the levels of judges? What religions today have a hierarchy today that must be used to access the Almighty?

17. What was so special about Jethro's advice to Moses that earned it a place of merit in the Torah - and indeed why does the Torah give him great credit for his suggestion: 'Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all he said' (18:24)?
18. Why did Yitro return to his own land?
19. On what month did the Israelites enter the Wilderness of Sinai? Why is this important? What commanded holy day of Leviticus 23 occurs each year during the third month?
20. How do the Scriptures describe the beginning of a month? How did Israel know it was the first of the third month?
21. In Exodus 19:4, YHWH tells Moses that He brought the people to Him "on the wings of eagles." How is this similar to the expression used in Revelation 12:14, where Israel is protected by YHWH from her enemies?
22. In Exodus 19:5-6 a special blessing is spoken over the nation of Israel. That very same passage is quoted in the Newer Testament in 1 Peter 2:9-10. How could the exact words be used to describe the nation of Israel in the Older Testament AND the body of believers in the Newer Testament IF these are two separate groups? Or are these groups the same?
23. Why did YHWH choose Israel to be His covenant people?
24. Did Israel agree to obey all of the Torah before they heard the commands? Did this work for them?
25. Why were the people told to wash their clothes and remain pure for three days? In what ways was this similar to a type or baptism or mikvah?
26. The people who approached the mountain before the appointed time were to be killed. How is this similar to unauthorized people who came into YHWH's sanctuary in the book of Numbers?
27. Why would "going near a woman" make someone unclean? Reference Exodus 19:15, Leviticus 15:19-24 and Leviticus 20:18.
28. What signs appeared at the mountain of YHWH when the Torah was given through Moses?
29. In Exodus 19:18 the Torah says that the "smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently." What does it tell us that the smoke ascended up from the mountains to the heavens and not from the heavens down?
30. YHWH continued to give instructions to the people regarding the mountain as holy. He did this several times in our Torah portion to keep people from dying. Is YHWH merciful?
31. Why did YHWH give access to the mountain in stages – first the people at the bottom, then the elders and leaders at the middle, and then Moses at the top? How is this similar to the construction of the Temple and Tabernacle's three parts?
32. Describe how the Ten Commandments have affected all major religions and cultures of the world?
33. Are the Ten Commandments still valid for today?
34. How does Christianity list the Ten Commandments? How does Judaism list the Ten Commandments? Explain why and how these two lists differ.
35. Did everyone alive in the world hear the Ten Commandments or only Moses and Israel?
36. In Judaism, the Ten Commandments are often referred to as the "Ten Words." How were the Ten Words divided into two groups of instructions?
37. Compare the giving of the Ten Words in Exodus 20 to Deuteronomy 5:6-17. What is different?
38. What is the first of the Ten Commandments?
39. Is the command "do not murder" or "do not kill?" When would killing be allowed?
40. How is it derived that "do not steal" refers to kidnapping?
41. How do you keep the command to "honor the Sabbath day by setting it apart?" Do you work on the Sabbath? How do you define "work?" Why would YHWH care what day we worship? Can any day be the Sabbath?
42. The commandment regarding the Sabbath is expressed here as "remember" the Sabbath. Later, in Deuteronomy 5:12, the command is to "observe" the Sabbath. What is the difference? Are these two separate commands?

43. How does Matthew 5:22 explain that murder occurs simply through anger?
44. What does 1 Corinthians 6:10 say will happen to all thieves?
45. In Matthew 5:28 Y'shua said that whoever simply looks upon a woman with lust has already committed adultery. How does this and other passages reflect that the 10 Commandments are more than just outward actions?
46. Why do the Ten Commandments so strongly emphasize the nature of the actual relationship between Man and YHWH and between Man and Man, but have relatively little focus on ritual observance?
47. Does the order of the Ten Commandments have any significance?
48. How are each of the Ten Commandments discussed or commented on in the Brit Chadasha?
49. How did the people respond to the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20:15-18?
50. Do you think it is valid to look at this passage as a wedding between YHWH and Israel? Why or why not?
51. How does YHWH test His people with His presence Exodus 20:17?
52. What were the Israelites to make for YHWH in accordance to His commands for worship? Could they build this item just any way they wanted or was it to be specifically constructed?
53. Exodus 20:24 seems to permit numerous places of sacrifice. Is such allowed?
54. Could the prohibition to cut the stones used for the altar be to preclude the temptation to carve images into them?
55. Why does the use of iron tools profane the altar?
56. Why would YHWH care about stopping the nakedness of His priests as seen in Exodus 20:26 if YHWH would later command the priests to wear undergarments?
57. What did you learn from this Open Bible study?

The Open Bible is a teaching series written by Daniel Rendelman of Emet Ministries. Find more teachings, audio messages, videos, and music at www.emetministries.com.

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