



## Yeshua's Yoke

### An Invitation to Rest

January 31, 2023; revised November 19, 2024

Come to Me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden,  
and I will give you rest.

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me,  
for I am gentle and humble in heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls.

For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

Yeshua, *Matthew 11:28-30*

The *Torah* is *the Law* (the first five books of the Bible) or *God's 613 Instructions for Life*. Learning and following Torah was an arduous task and responsibility and, therefore, was called **The Yoke of Torah**.

About 3,400 years ago, God gave the Law to Moses as a covenant gift. These instructions were tailored for the Israelites whom He miraculously delivered from 430 years of slavery in Egypt. They were completely unfamiliar with freedom and rest and, so, they needed to learn how to depend on God alone as He led them out into the wilderness to teach them. It was an arduous task.

Although they had worked *physically* hard for so long, they had not *worked at rest*. They were spiritually lazy. They had depended on their taskmasters for instruction and sustenance rather than on God. After years in the wilderness, just before they were to enter the Promised Land, Moses reminded the people:

"Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the Lord promised on oath to your forefathers. Remember how the Lord your Creator led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years to humble and test you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you and let you be hungry and then fed you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord."

(Deuteronomy 8:1-3)

The Israelites of this generation were vastly different from their descendants, and so through the centuries, the Torah/Law was interpreted by judges, prophets, kings, and rabbis to apply it to their times. 1,400 years later in first-century Judea, rabbis still studied and interpreted the Law in different schools of thought, some strict and others lenient. If the Law was interpreted and acted upon as God intended, it was *fulfilled*.<sup>1</sup> If it was wrongly interpreted, it led people astray, and the Law was *abolished*.

Young Jewish men studied and memorized Torah from an early age (5-6). If a young man showed great promise in study, he would often be chosen by a rabbi to further his study before becoming a rabbi himself. As a disciple, he would **take on the yoke of learning** his rabbi's interpretation of Torah as they lived side-by-side within the context of daily life. **Taking on the yoke** of a rabbi was the same as **taking on the yoke of his rabbi's interpretation** of the Law.

The purpose of the Law never changed – to guide His people into freedom, rest, and shalom. Just as God (through Moses) taught and trained the people to depend on Him as He guided them to rest, Rabbi Yeshua taught and trained His disciples how to depend on God without the oversight of the religious rulers whose purpose was to enslave them for their own gain.

Yeshua's words, **Come to Me**, were an invitation to **take on His yoke of learning to live the Law** as His Father intended – in freedom, rest, and shalom. He was (is) the embodiment and expression of the Law, the

Word made flesh. Yeshua said, “Do not think that I have come to *abolish* the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to *abolish* them but to *fulfill* them.” (Matthew 5:17)

Every word from His lips and each action of His life taught His disciples how to live in the heart of His Father’s purpose... how to *fulfill* the Law. Within His yoke (His interpretation of the Law), they would no longer *strive* but would *follow by the Spirit*.

Yeshua walked out the words of the Prophet Jeremiah:

“This is what the Lord says: ‘Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; Then you will find a resting place for your souls.’” (Jeremiah 6:16a)

And Yeshua taught and fulfilled the Law as the Psalmist experienced it (Psalm 19:7-8):

The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

It is the same with us.

As His disciples, we come into His yoke, learn from Him, and find rest for our souls. The way may be difficult, fraught with obstacles, hardships, and persecution, but His presence is with us, His voice comforts and instructs us, and the Holy Spirit imbues and empowers us.

Yeshua’s yoke (His correct interpretation of the Law) is a protective shelter, an intimate place where He instructs us in our unique situations. He knows us completely (Psalm 139). We can trust His instruction. He is our Wonderful Counselor! (Isaiah 9:6)

As we ask Him for instruction and wisdom, listen to Him, and follow, we *fulfill Torah*. We drink the purest living water and embrace the greatest romance!

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<sup>1</sup> For more on this subject, see my writing *In His Dust – Abolishing and Fulfilling*.