

Hear AND Obey AND Keep: *Shema* and *Shamar*!

A Little Gem

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We begin our gatherings with the “***Shema***,” which is usually translated as hear, but in Hebraic understanding is much more. **To hear is to do, so hear and obey** is a more full understanding. It is an affirmation common to all the people around the world who honor the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which was just more fully addressed in a recent article about why SAM uses the Shema and Hebrew prayers. At every gathering, we are reminded of the need to do both, hear and obey Him.

Scripture admonishes us to keep His commandments. 129 times in 63 verses “keep” and “commandments” are found together, as well as other inexact matches.

*“Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and **keep** His charge,*

His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always.

Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV

And echoed by Yeshua:

*“If you love Me, **keep** My commandments.*

John 14:15 NKJV

The word translated “keep” is from the Hebrew “***shamar***,” and in Greek, it is “***tereo***.” Both carry the connotation to **guard and preserve**, more than just to observe which is what we English speakers might think. This is not a concept that most church goers have comprehended, in our opinion, including ourselves from those days!

We are discussing here the admonition in Scripture to **hear and obey**, and now **to keep/guard**, especially in regard to His appointed times, His *moedim*. What does it look like to keep or guard His appointed times? As we understand and practice it, it means that we do all in our power to honor and keep His days free from other encumbrances so that we can gather and continue our holy rehearsals to be more like Him and to walk in His ways.

*..not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some,
but encouraging one another;
and all the more as you see the day drawing near.
Hebrews 10:25 NASB*

It means we look ahead to whatever complications might arise and make advance preparations so that we can remain set apart for the day. It means we look ahead on our vacation calendars at work, planning to have vacation days available so that we can honor His appointed times. Barb believes that it is this aspect of “keeping” or *shamar* that was missed in the story of the 10 virgins. Only five, called wise virgins, had been rehearsing-*Shema* and *Shamar*-hear and obey and keep-- and were prepared in advance for the Shabbat when the call came. They did their buying and selling ahead of time, as well as being intimate with Messiah so that not only did they know Him, but He also knew them! The others knew Messiah, and knew something was coming, but they didn’t know to keep or guard themselves and their time to be prepared. In the parable, He tells them He doesn’t know them. Obviously, He is Omniscient and it isn’t that He didn’t know who they were! More adequately understood, it is that they had not troubled themselves to get to know their soon coming Bridegroom in His ways, as He walked, but only as far as they could see, doing things their way, not His.

This is part of the rehearsing we do with every Shabbat when we begin planning already as one Shabbat ends, toward the next, so that our day will be free from intrusion; free to fully enter into His day with His people. Since we don’t live in a Torah observant society, it can be extremely challenging at first, to make the adaptations needed. We, the long term members of SAM, also had to go through a transition period where we learned to prepare in order to honor Him and we fully expect that people new to our community will also have a learning and transition period.

But we do want to set the goal in front of you.

*“If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath
and from doing as you please on my holy day,
if you call the Sabbath a delight
and the Lord’s holy day honorable,
and if you honor it by not going your own way
and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,
then you will find your joy in the Lord,
and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land
and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.”
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*

[Isaiah 58:13-14 | NIV](#)