

קידוש

kiddush

Kiddush means “to declare something set apart or sanctified.” In traditional Judaism, the word *kiddush* is most often used to describe the blessing, incorporating the fruit of the vine (grape juice or wine), in the declaration of the weekly Shabbat or a Festival Shabbat as a day set apart according to the commandments of the Torah. When the same word is used in the plural, קידושים, *kiddushin*, it refers to the declaration of a father with regard to his daughter who is betrothed or “set apart” to one man as his future bride. Thus, betrothal is a beautiful picture of the way that all of us are set apart or sanctified to Yeshua. Since He is the bridegroom (Mk 2:19–20; Jn 3:29–30) and we are His betrothed bride (2Cor 1:22; Eph 1:14; Rev 19:7; 21:2, 9), we are set apart to Him, waiting for His coming and the marriage celebration when we will forever dwell with Him (1Thess 4:16–18).



When we declare the Shabbat to be set apart from the other six days of work, or when we mark a Festival Shabbat as set apart, we do so with joy because we have come to understand and believe that in obeying what God has commanded us to do, He will give us His blessing. In Isaiah 58:13–14 we read:

“If because of the sabbath, you turn your foot from doing your own pleasure on My holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy day of Adonai honorable, and honor it, desisting from your own ways, from seeking your own pleasure and speaking your own word, then you will take delight in Adonai, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; and I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of Adonai has spoken.”

This is why it became our tradition to use a cup of juice in the *kiddush* ceremony. Throughout the Tanach, wine is seen as a symbol of joy (Deut 14:26; Jer 31:12; Ps 104:15; Ecc 9:7; Zech 10:7), and so in declaring the Shabbat as a special day set apart from the six days of work, we also anticipate the joy that will be ours as we enter into God’s rest.

Because it is also our practice to show that God’s commandments are beautiful, it has become traditional to use an ornate and special cup for the *kiddush* ceremony. *Kiddush* cups, beautifully hand crafted, adorn the Shabbat table in anticipation of the ceremony.

The *kiddush* blessing itself incorporates 1) that the Shabbat is a gift from God, 2) that it is a reminder of the creation when God rested from His work, 3) that it is a reminder of our redemption from Egypt, and 4) that the Shabbat as a gift from God is a reminder of how He loves us and take pleasure in us as His chosen people.

Hopefully, as we recite the *kiddush* each erev Shabbat, the joy of the Lord will fill our hearts as we are reminded of His love for us, and of the rest that He has promised all who await His coming with hearts of faithful anticipation.